

The traitor of Arnhem

Nobody wanted the job of arresting King Kong

~WHAT HAS HAPPENED~

COL. PINTO

former chief of the Dutch counter-espionage service.

● Col. Pinto, suspecting that Christian Lindemans, a Dutch resistance leader, popularly known as King Kong, is in reality a German spy, orders him to report at a Brussels hotel. But at the appointed time two Dutch officers arrive to say that Lindemans has gone elsewhere—"on an important mission."

Col. Pinto does not know at the time that in three days there is to be an attack behind the German lines by 10,000 British airborne troops.

INSOLENTLY low . . .
dangerously low . . .
the British reconnaissance plane flew over Arnhem town.

It flew slowly at less than 800 feet, searching carefully like a woman looking for a needle in a carpet.

A few German police fired their fat pistols wildly, uncertainly. The nearest German anti-aircraft battery was two miles away. The people of Arnhem watched, their faces, upturned, white like daisies.

It was not a very unusual sight, an Allied recon plane over the Dutch border that autumn of 1944.

"No sign of the enemy at Arnhem," reported the pilot later that afternoon. He produced his aerial photos for proof. "Only some Bosche who pot-shotted at us with revolvers!"

The date was September 16. Much depended upon there being no German troops near Arnhem. Ten thousand men of the British 1st Airborne Division waited to be dropped at Arnhem at dawn the next day. Twenty thousand American paratroops

at dawn the next day. Twenty thousand American paratroops and 3000 Poles were to be dropped at Grave and Nijmegen.

This was Field-Marshal Montgomery's daring plan to send his armies rolling into the German north plain over a chain of airborne carpets, spread across the hampering Maas Canal and the Waal.

The paratroopers ate their tea contentedly that evening. There were no Germans near Arnhem. It was official.

As dusk fell, and they oiled their guns and knives, played cards, wrote letters home, a noise like a farmer's thresher came down the north road from Zutphen.

An entire German Panzer division was travelling cautiously into Arnhem!

Four hundred grey steel Nazi turrets rumbled through the midnight darkness, deployed hull-down behind houses and hedgerows, switched off engines and prouetted silent gun-muzzles to cover every curve of the fields and hedgerows beyond Arnhem town.

Then they, too, waited expectantly for dawn. The trap was set . . .



NINE days later, 2400 sur-

NINE days later, 2400 survivors of the British 1st Airborne Division had withdrawn across the river, leaving 7000 disastrously behind in the carnage that had been Arnhem.

This—Monty's first and only big defeat of the entire war—delayed the Nazi collapse a further eight months. In the subsequent "Black Winter" of wrecked dykes and war-trampled harvests, nearly 200,000 Dutch folk died in flood and famine.

Somebody had warned the Germans. Some spy had betrayed Arnhem.

As Chief of the Dutch Counter-Espionage Mission attached to SHAEF, it was my job to find that traitor!

The evidence came dramatically six weeks later. I was in Eindhoven, behind the now advanced Allied line. I had just finished an exhausting interview, nearly three hours of searching cross-examination, of a young Dutchman named Cornelis Varloop.

I had finally trapped him into admitting he was a spy.

I stood up, stretched myself, dusted cigarette-ash from my uniform. He watched me.

"Am I to be shot, Colonel?"

His voice was a whisper. He swallowed as though with difficulty, down his long, pale throat.

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I shrugged, but did not answer. It seemed obvious he was going to be shot. He was a spy.

We had caught him in our security net that I had spread at Eindhoven, where the combined British, American, and Canadian troops lay barked for the winter or the river after the disaster of Arnhem.

Here I had set up a security camp, of barbed-wire and armed guards, to collect the hundreds of Dutch youths who were creeping through the Nazi entrenchments out from occupied Netherlands to volunteer to fight with the Allies.

Among these men, planted like booby traps, we found occasional German agents.

Cornelis Verloop was one such. He was about 27. His face looked like a white satanic mask; his eyes icily alert.

"I have a young wife in Amsterdam, Colonel—a good Dutch girl. She is innocent of any crime."

"So? We do not propose to shoot your wife."

He tried again. "I will give you valuable information, Colonel—in return for my life?"

"You fool," I said softly, "such information as you may have will be extracted from you before you are shot. It is a simple routine."

do not suspect I possess.

"What do you know?" I said contemptuously.

Verloop leaned forward eagerly put his long hands together, and recited the names and descriptions of all my Intelligence H.Q. staff! The identities of some were secret even to many G.H.Q. Staff Officers.

"Also, your chief agent in Brussels is Paul Leuven, and in Amsterdam a man named Dampremy, and in . . . glibly he sat at my table and recited the whole main network of our counter-espionage system in Belgium and the Netherlands—or, at least, enough to indicate an uncomfortably dangerous betrayal by somebody.

"How did you know this?" The grey smoke of my cigarette shivered in its upward spiral as my fingers shook slightly. I was afraid for the other agents, still behind the German lines in the towns of occupied Holland, if such acts were known.

"Who told you?" I said harshly.

Cornelis Verloop continued to sit alertly, half smiling. "Colonel Kiese-wetter, chief of the Abwehr (The German Counter-Intelligence Service)," he said. "He told me in the Abwehr H.Q. at Diebergen. But who told Kiese-wetter is my secret."



I regarded him thoughtfully through half-shut eyes.

"Verloop," I said quietly. "You are a traitor and you shall not buy your life by being more of a traitor than hell meant you to be. This is total war. Your dirty Nazi friends wrote the rules—not me. Therefore I say that you will tell me who gave that news to Kiese-wetter."

The pert smile slowly faded from the face of Cornelis Verloop.

"In exchange for my life, Colonel . . ." He made another despairing bid to bargain. I thumbed the safety-catch off my Walther pistol.

"Get up," I said curtly. I was going to take him through the night black-out to Eindhoven Prison, from his desolate house in Phillips Park suburb where he had been interrogated.

But Cornelis Verloop astute spy, shameless bargainer—and mortal coward, misunderstood my gesture with the gun. "Wait—," he gasped. Men say "Wait!" when they think they are about to die. "It was Chris—it was King Kong! He is in the pay of the Abwehr—has been a Nazi agent since March!"

"King Kong"—the admiring nickname given by Dutch resistance fighters to the man Christian Lindemans, son of a Rotterdam garage proprietor, and perhaps the most popular of Europe's under-

by



He smiled. "Impossible, Colonel—you can make me tell what you think I should know, but you cannot extract information that you do not suspect I possess."

"What do you know?" I said

garage proprietor, and perhaps the most popular of Europe's underground soldiers.

And he was the man who, according to the two emissaries who came to me at the Palace Hotel in Brussels three days before the Arnhem invasion had set out on a dangerous mission.

He was taking a "top secret" message behind the enemy lines.

And here was the result of this dangerous mission.

So, realising all this with a sudden baleful weariness, I regarded Cornelis Verloop expressionlessly.

"Did King Kong betray Arnhem to the Nazis?"

He nodded. "—Ja—he told Colonel Kieseletter on September 15 when he called at Abwehr headquarters, that British and American troops were to be dropped."

"Did he tell where?"

"Ja—he did. He said that a British Airborne Division was waiting to be dropped on Sunday morning beyond Eindhoven." Verloop swallowed anxiously.



AS soon as I had placed Verloop safely in a cell of Eindhoven military prison, I stormed to the Dutch Intelligence H.Q. and burst into the officers' mess.

Everybody looked up startled. "Why, Colonel, you're white as chalk!" said one. "What's the matter?"

They were drinking, relaxing in brown leather armchairs, listening to the radio.

"Turn that thing off!" I banged my fist on the table. "Damn it," I shouted, "the time has come to realise that when I say a man is untrustworthy, he should not promptly be sent through enemy

lines with the most vital damned message of the war!"

There was silence. They watched me, puzzled.

"Two of you will leave by car immediately for Castle Wittouck and arrest King Kong!"

I think they believed I had gone mad. A senior officer laughed, uneasily. "Two of us, sir? Arrest King Kong? He would pick up two men like rag dolls."

They knew, as I did, that King Kong carried hand grenades in his pockets, festooned himself with knives and guns like some legendary brigand. He was, in many ways, perhaps the most dangerous adversary in Holland.

I selected two reliable officers. "When you get to Castle Wittouck," I said, "there will be 10 SHAEF military police waiting for you. Put them in a room near to Prince Bernhard's private suite.

"Then it will be easy. The man is conceited as a child. His own pride will disarm him. Tell him Prince Bernhard is waiting to decorate him for his gallant ser-

vice to Holland.

Get him tidy, persuade him to change into a clean shirt, shed all his weapons. Escort him to the room where the police are waiting—and they must have orders to seize him at once. I want him alive."

The two officers nodded, grinned faintly, buckled on their pistol belts and departed. I sent a teletype to H.Q. SHAEF at Brussels in Rue de la Loi, asked for 10 sturdy military police to be sent to Castle Wittouck.

Then I went to bed.

But—the damage had been done. Seven thousand British fighting men had been lost at Arnhem. Each man who died in this war henceforward, each house that fell and each woman who waited vainly, would be put to King Kong's traitorous account.

I was tired. My eyes stung with weariness. But sleep would not come . . .

TO-MORROW: No handcuffs were big enough.