

Arnhem Remembrance 80th Anniversary

Introduction

The graphic displays the heart of Arnhem Remembrance 80th Anniversary¹. We must never forget. The expression **Known unto God** is from Acts 15:18 AV1611. It was chosen by Rudyard Kipling². NKJV, NIVs, ESV editors desecrated the expression and in turn the headstones but **Known unto God** still stands.



God save the king! - The national anthem and a paratrooper's farewell

The expression **God save the king!** is of course part of England's national anthem and well-known as such. However, that expression turned up in an unusual place in World War 2. On September 17th 1944, British Army paratroopers captured the north end of the road bridge across the Nederrijn or Lower Rhine in the Dutch town of Arnhem³. This action was commemorated in the 1977 film *A Bridge Too Far*⁴. See the graphic.



A Bridge Too Far – Battle of the Arnhem Road Bridge⁵

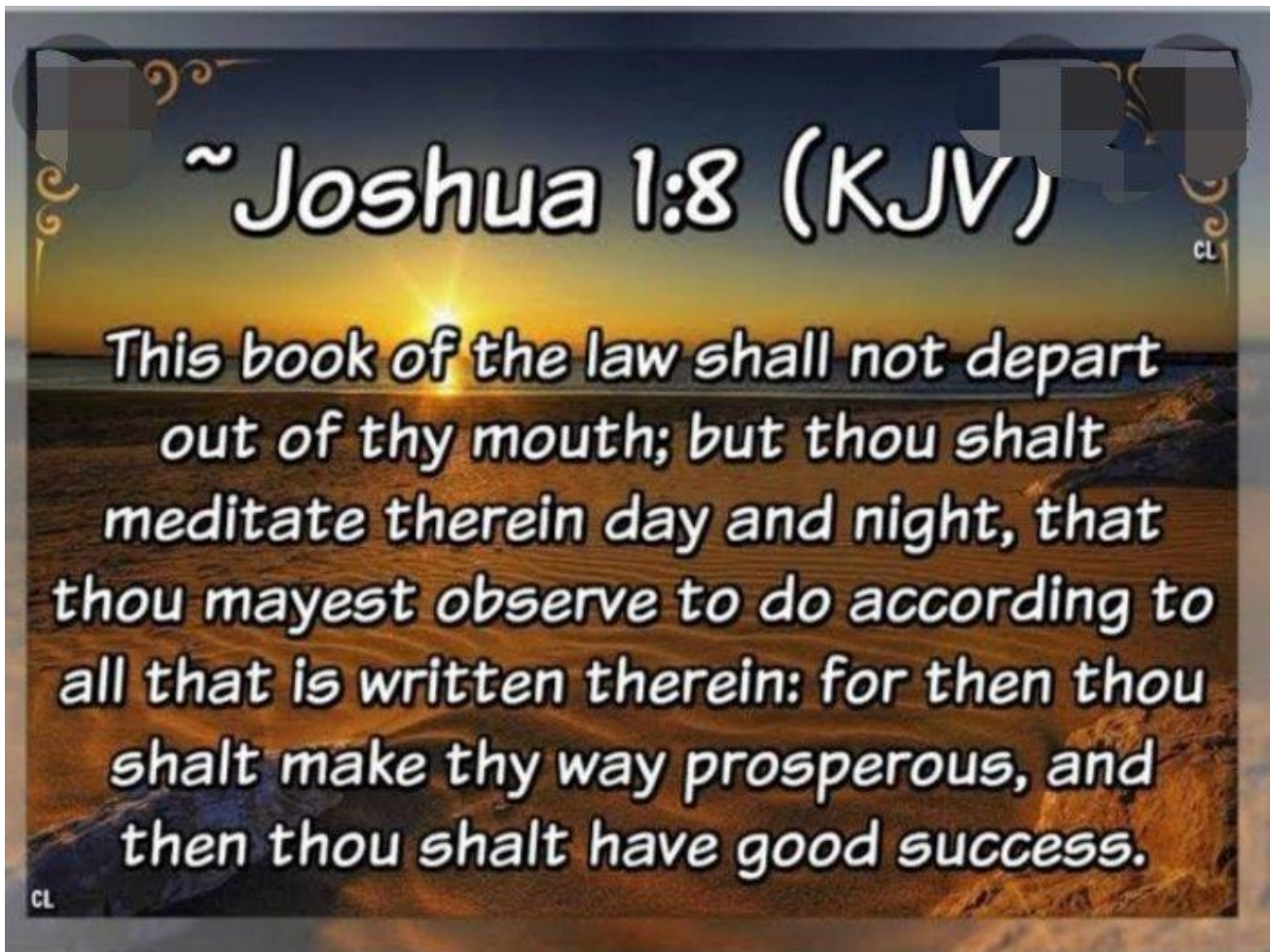
After four days of heavy fighting, the paratroopers were finally overwhelmed by superior German forces but on the morning of Thursday September 21st, a paratroop signaler **known unto God** Acts 15:18, Philippians 4:6 radioed a final message from somewhere near the Arnhem Road Bridge.

The last bit of the message said⁶ “Out of ammunition. God Save the King.”

The expression **God save the king!** comes straight from a 1611 Authorized King James Holy Bible. The words occur **5** times in **the book of the LORD** Isaiah 34:16. They are found in 1 Samuel 10:24, 2 Samuel 16:16 twice, 2 Kings 11:12, 2 Chronicles 23:11 and they have stood there undimmed and unblemished for **400+** years. They will stand there forever. The NKJV, NIVs, ESV cut the expression and so they're like **Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made...was cast into prison.)** Luke 23:18-19.

God save the king! nevertheless illustrates something about the 1611 English Holy Bible, the real English Standard Version. The Author of the Book said in Hebrews 13:5 **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**

And to the obedient follower **the book of the LORD** Isaiah 34:16⁷ is like its Author.



At the Arnhem Bridge

The question arises what would it have been like to be there, at the Arnhem Bridge battle? I've tried to address that question in my book *Sound of Battle* through the eyes of Paratroop Sergeant Bill Harris from North Staffordshire. See the graphic. Bill's girl Nursing Officer Anne Linton QAIMNS/R from North Riding, as I imagined her⁸, is in the bottom left hand corner. She looks ready to cry. Not surprising with the love of her life MIA. Anne has to put her love for Bill on the back burner of course and focus on caring for the desperately wounded men who need her, men wounded in the same area of operations where her Bill has gone missing.

What follows is an excerpt from a personal account by ex-Sergeant Mr Neville Ashley, although the scripture additions are mine. The narrative is set late afternoon and night-fall Wednesday 20th September 1944. Some paratroop survivors, among them Sergeant Harris, have taken up position among the concrete pillars of the ramp to the Arnhem Bridge. Their wounded mates are being seen to by the medics in the safety of a timber yard that was there at the time. This is the excerpt.

Sound of Battle⁹

It was late afternoon. Only a handful of rounds remained. Reloading his Sten for what he reckoned would be the last time, Harris placed the wounded Grover's rifle within easy reach, bayonet fixed. The next lot of attackers would face cold steel.

But the foe had left, to assail the perimeter elsewhere.

Tanks and SP guns ranged among the ruins on both sides of the bridge, blasting the buildings with WP shells. By nightfall, the whole area was ablaze. The tanks' sinister, bulky shadows edging along the streets in the firelight looked like monsters from the underworld, terrifying to numbed brains. The men beneath the ramp sweltered in the heat, isolated. With no further attack imminent, they drew together for mutual support.

The collapse of gutted houses seemed like one continuous roar. Wreathed by smoke, Harris and his companions coughed and spat thick mucus.

During the night, Harris glimpsed a church tower ablaze, to the northwest. He began quoting Psalm 91 out loud:

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust... his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.”

He paused, sitting with his back against a pillar, his knees drawn up, staring at the underside of the ramp, glad of the darkness so that no one could see the tears sliding down his face. It suddenly occurred to Harris that the Sten gun with which he was armed, though effective, would often not kill an enemy but simply knock him out of the fight. That was good, he thought, remembering his burden for souls, friend and foe, in North Africa the previous year.

“Go on, Sergeant Harris.” Lieutenant Thorne's voice sounded quietly. His gaunt figure stood motionless in the midst of his beleaguered troopers.

The other men were listening intently. Harris continued:

“With thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”

He stopped. “That's all I remember, sir,” said Harris.

“Well done, Sergeant,” the lieutenant said approvingly, the others murmuring agreement. End of Excerpt

Just to reassure you Paratroop Sergeant Bill Harris after eight months as a POW makes it back home to England after the war. There are joyful reunions:

Reaching his parents' front door, Harris breathed deep and knocked. It opened. He wore a new red beret and Dennison smock over his battledress, and his mother gaped when she saw him. Then she flung her arms around her son and wept on his shoulder...

Bill was there at Blackshaw's little station to greet Anne when she alighted from the train... They couldn't speak at first, could only hug and kiss each other until Anne felt that she was suffocating. Then, sobbing on his shoulder, she managed to whisper, “Oh, Bill.” Bill and Anne were married soon afterwards.

Postscript as was in 2004

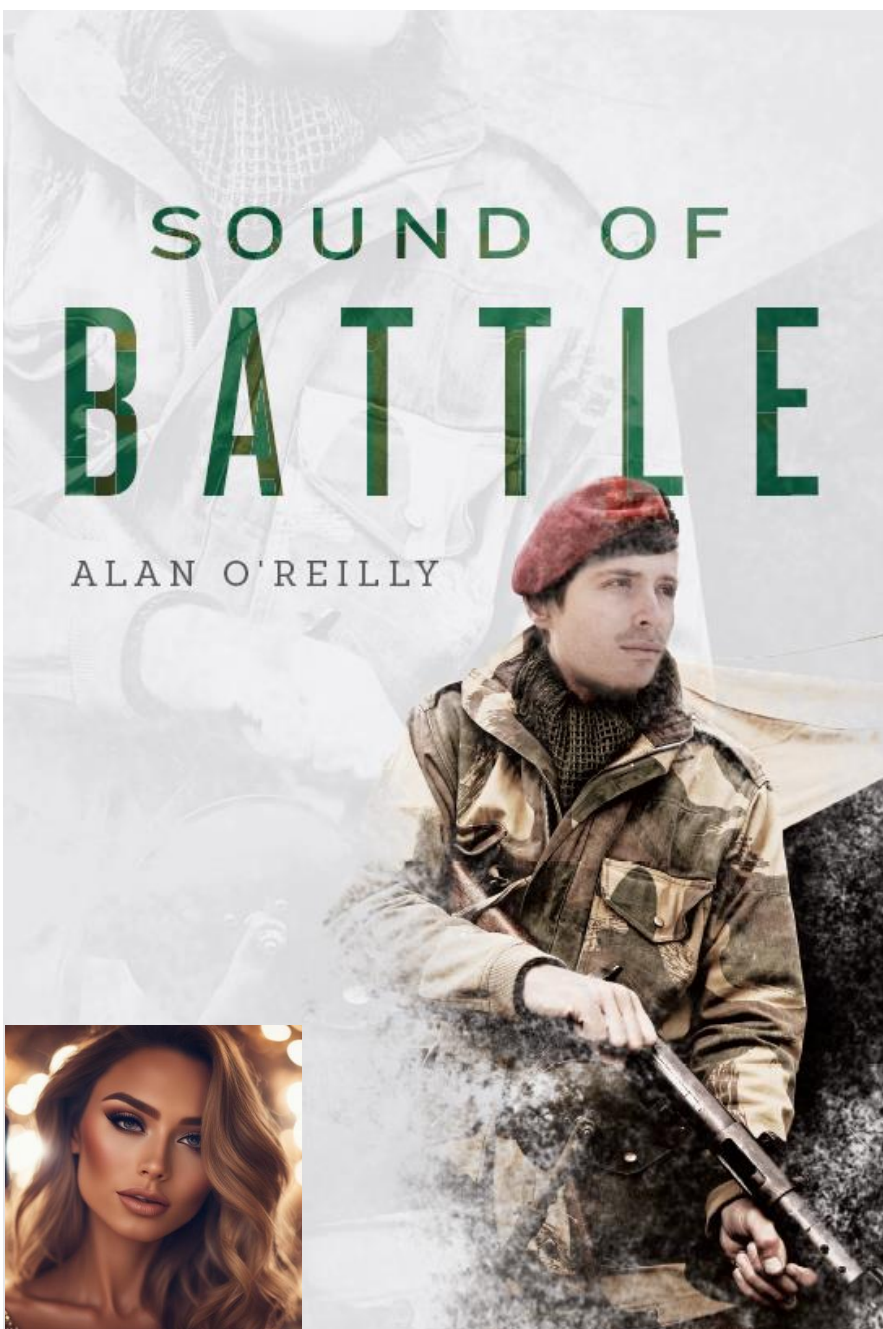
Bill and Anne settled in North Staffordshire, where Bill completed his studies and embarked on a successful career in industry. Anne continued nursing, until the children came along. When Bill retired in 1980, they moved to North Yorkshire, to be closer to Anne's widowed mum, where they still live.

They've been richly blessed throughout their marriage, but in the eventide of their lives, with the ranks of their wartime friends growing thinner every year, they're appalled by the manifold betrayal of the great deliverance of 1939–1945 that is rampant in Britain today. Yet they've never lost the conviction of the hymnist who wrote:

We are children of Thy free men, who sleep beneath the sod.
For the might of Thine arm, we bless Thee, our God, our fathers' God¹⁰.

Thus they can say with the apostles, Peter, 2 Peter 3 and John, Revelation 22:

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness 2 Peter 3:13. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus Revelation 22:20.



References

- ¹ www.amazon.co.uk/Men-at-Arnhem-Geoffrey-Powell/dp/0850529662 *Men At Arnhem* by Geoffrey Powell aka Tom Angus Leo Cooper Edition 1976 back cover
- ² en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Known_onto_God *Known unto God*
- ³ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnhem#The_Battle_of_Arnhem *Arnhem*
- ⁴ www.imdb.com/title/tt0075784/ *A Bridge Too Far*
- ⁵ twitter.com/notesfasmil/status/910752439606943744 #RIP David Shepherd: renowned mil and wildlife artist #Arnhem painting graced Ryan's book 'A Bridge Too Far'
- ⁶ www.amazon.co.uk/Bridge-Too-Far-Battle-Arnhem/dp/0340933984 *A Bridge Too Far* by Cornelius Ryan, p 430
- ⁷ www.prayersandpetitions.org/joshua-1-8/
- ⁸ www.buysellshoutouts.com/celebrities-known-for-replying-to-dms-on-instagram/#Key_Takeaways
- ⁹ www.amazon.co.uk/Sound-Battle-Alan-OReilly/dp/1534613722 *Sound of Battle* pp 292-294, 347, 357, 361
- ¹⁰ www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&sca_esv=a924c72e3c0004d7&sca_upv=1&tbm=vid&sxsrf=ADLYWIKh0f91v6VaNjO-SFcmI0QWMYF1w:1725120724321&q=for+the+might+of+thine+arm+sung&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiS396_z5-IAxW6UUEAHf88C70Q8ccDegQIUxAD&biw=992&bih=387&dpr=1.94#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:ad8ed6fc,vid:FCWNoS6AgVk,st:0