



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 June 2011

David Cameron

Thank you for your letter of 25 May, alerting me to the reunion planned for the brave Veterans of Operation Market Garden.

It is now nearly 67 years since our forces embarked on one of the most ambitious operations of modern times. I am delighted to learn that through this reunion their efforts will once again be remembered.

It is testament to the courage of those soldiers and airmen of the Armed Forces that their heroic acts in September 1944 have been immortalised in film. While I am sure that there has been an element of dramatisation, and focus largely fell on the battle for Arnhem, only those that took part will really know how they felt going into the unknown. I have always been a strong supporter of the Armed Forces and remain in awe of their achievements in keeping us safe. Many of our successes today are built on the lessons we have learned often at great cost, from operations conducted during World War II, and I know that paratroopers in today's Army are proud to be associated with those of September 1944. In this, your final reunion, please accept my personal thanks on behalf of a grateful nation. You have my unreserved admiration and respect.

May I also take the time to pay tribute to the families of these brave Servicemen. Not only those who had to cope with the absence and uncertainty but also those, all too numerous, who received the tragic news that their loved ones would not be coming home. I know when I write to families today how difficult it is to express my thoughts and appreciation, and that words on paper can never compensate for the loss of a loved one. However, I hope that any bereaved families attending the reunion today are comforted in the knowledge that the sacrifice of their loved ones will never be forgotten.

Samantha and I send our warmest wishes. We are sure that this final reunion will be a fitting tribute to all of those Servicemen and their families involved in such a dramatic time in our history.

Yours truly,

Dorothy Blaney

Mrs Dorothy Blaney