THE DUTCH ARMY DURING WORLD WAR I

by

John J. Bout

B.A., Brock University, 1970

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

in the Department
of
History

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

The University of British Columbia
September, 1972
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of HISTORY

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date JULY 17, 1972
From August 1914 to November 1918 the Kingdom of the Netherlands maintained a mobilized army of roughly 200,000 men. In addition to the burden this placed upon the country, the Dutch were very much affected in other ways by the war outside their border: trade was disrupted, ships were lost, there were food and raw material shortages, and the pressures and demands from the belligerent neighbours had to be endured in order to avoid war. All these things would have caused problems for any nation occupying a similar geographic position as the Netherlands, but for the Dutch people these were especially difficult years. On the one hand they were faced with the apparent necessity of maintaining an armed force to repel a possible invasion; on the other hand they possessed an inherent and century old dislike for things military. After the initial months of uncertainty and fear, the nation was faced with the exceedingly difficult problem of maintaining an armed force consisting of men who had no interest in serving, for a population which was at best apathetic and at worst hostile, led by a government divided on the question of the need for such a large mobilized army.

The primary function of the army—defending the country against a foreign invasion—was soon supplemented by a number of other roles: caring for refugees and prisoners of war, preventing the extensive smuggling of goods along the borders, maintaining internal order, and frustrating foreign
attempts to use the Netherlands as a base for espionage and drafting men for service in foreign armies. The army had to carry out its roles while suffering from the deteriorating economic situation, the increasing social divisions within the country, as well as growing pressure and propaganda from the various anti-military organizations.

After four years of mobilization the army was on the verge of collapse and unable to fight the forces threatening to destroy the nation from within. Civilian volunteers from all walks of life had to be called up while the army was sent home. Yet the nation learned nothing from the 1914-1918 experience. In fact, all the wrong conclusions were drawn in the years following the Peace of Versailles. The general consensus was that the Netherlands had stayed out of the war because it had wanted to remain neutral and had created and maintained an adequate defence force. In the post-war years the army was neglected again, anti-militarism was given free voice, defence installations were uncared for, foreign events were not considered in the light of their possible consequences for the Netherlands, and warnings of an impending invasion were disregarded.

The quick defeat at the hands of the German troops in May 1940 caused many Dutch people to look in anguish for the reasons for their inglorious surrender. Many writers have sought the explanations in the twenty years before 1940, but the roots go back much further. They were already growing before 1914, and became firmly embedded during the Great War.
The Dutch people did not grasp the lessons of the 1914-1918 period, never changed their ideas or ways during and after that time, and were therefore an easy victim of German military aggression in 1940. The explanation for the fiasco of May, 1940 can be understood if the Dutch national attitude towards their military responsibilities during the Great War is understood.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ABSTRACT</strong></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</strong></td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>The Netherlands in the Decades before 1914</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Social Conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Political Situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Foreign Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>August, September, October, 1914</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mobilization and the Plan of Defence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Condition of the Army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Position of the Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Unexpected Responsibilities for the Army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Problems Within the Army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>Smuggling, Censorship and Counter-espionage</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Smuggling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Censorship and Counter-espionage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>Problems Within the Army</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>National Sentiment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Missed Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Leaves and other Problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Anti-Militarism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Attempts to Make Military Service Popular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustration Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of The Netherlands</td>
<td>199</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of the <strong>Stelling Holland</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of the <strong>Waterlinie Defences</strong></td>
<td>201</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of the <strong>Stelling Amsterdam</strong></td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing its 42 Fortifications and Strong Points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
The Netherlands in the Decades before 1914

1. Introduction

The geographic location of the Netherlands was an asset in time of peace and a liability in time of a European war. Situated on the North Sea and straddling the mouths of the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt Rivers, the Netherlands occupied the natural location for transfer of goods from sea-going vessels to river craft. In the event of a war involving Germany and Great Britain on opposite sides, however, the Dutch were in a precarious situation. England would want to prevent goods from reaching Germany via the Netherlands and could possibly want to invade her in order to attack Germany from Dutch soil. From the German side an invasion would be even more likely because the excellent Dutch harbours would be a great asset for the German surface and submarine fleet, while at the same time the Netherlands would be denied as a possible base of operation to the British.

In terms of numbers (roughly 6 million in 1914) and industrial might the Netherlands could not defend her whole territory against her two strong neighbours. By the turn of the century the Netherlands was still far from an industrialized nation; only one-third of the people derived their living from industry. Of all industrial workers in 1903, only 18 percent worked in establishments employing more than 500 workers. Many of the very small home industries were on their last legs.
Unable to compete with larger factories and imported products they maintained themselves by forcing their workers to work very long hours for little money. The government gave no stimulus to industry, but neither did it control or standardize prices, production, or quality. The country did not possess any raw materials except small quantities of coal and by 1913 these could only meet 10 per cent of the domestic demand.³

Trade, the transfer of goods, and agriculture were the corner-stones of the Dutch economy. Out of every 100 persons employed in 1909, 27 worked in agriculture and 19 in trade and transport.⁴ Agriculture was not only important economically, the location and extent of the fertile areas also made it possible that the Netherlands could defend part of its territory against a large invading force with a reasonable chance of success. Much of Holland⁵ lies below sea level and could be defended with the help of inundations. The resulting Vesting Holland⁶ could for a time be fed from the farms within this area. Most of the transfer of goods through the Netherlands took place by water, and the multitude of rivers, canals, and smaller waterways not only served as excellent and cheap transportation arteries, but also made it difficult for an invading force not familiar with the hazardous and treacherous nature of water and swampy ground.

Discussing the Dutch geographic location and economic strength in the framework of defence possibilities is using the advantage of hindsight and is quite different from what the Dutch people were concerned with in the decade before 1914.
Defence and military matters were of no interest except when the financial side was discussed. The country had not been involved in a war for 80 years (excluding a few minor colonial skirmishes) and for more than 50 years various governments had practised a policy of strict neutrality and impartiality. The Netherlands was a satiated nation which could lose a great deal in a war but win nothing. Vulnerable because it was a trading nation, not self sufficient in raw materials, weak numerically and small geographically, the Dutch had long ago realized that they could not play a major power role in Europe as they had been able to do in the seventeenth century. But neither did they try to win a position for themselves as a small, but important country. Neutrality was not just a matter of staying out of conflicting questions among other countries, it had become a sacred doctrine bordering very closely on isolationism. Trade and politics were kept as separate as possible, and the latter, as far as foreign events were concerned, was of very little interest to the Dutch people. Antipathetic towards all things military, and unwilling to spend any money on military projects, the nation as a whole refused to consider foreign events as to their possible consequences for the Netherlands. The Dutch never asked themselves what would happen if they remained neutral but Britain and Germany went to war against each other. Fifty per cent of all the foreign trade of the Netherlands was with Germany and twenty per cent with Great Britain. How much the Dutch depended on trade and the transfer of goods is evident from the following figures: in 1872, 7
2.6 tons of goods moved across the borders for each of the 3.5 million inhabitants; by 1899 the population had increased to 5 million and the per capita transfer to 8.3 tons. In 1867, Dutch harbours handled 7.4 million tons; by 1910 this had increased 413 per cent to 37,932,000 tons. That much of this trade and transfer traffic would be destroyed by a war between Great Britain and Germany, even if the Netherlands remained neutral, must have been obvious to anyone who gave it a little thought. But apparently no one did.

The Dutch put all their stakes on one card, refused to cover any other bets, and thought themselves safe. School children were taught all about the glorious Eighty Years War against Spain when the Netherlands won its independence (in 1648); and the heroic sea battles against the British during the seventeenth century when the Dutch admirals were the best in the world were covered in great detail. Adults proudly sang the national anthem which speaks of freedom from tyranny and fighting to the death against oppression. But the pride in the history of the Netherlands was seldom more than a sentimental glorification of the past without the conviction that one had to exert oneself for the fatherland. The Dutch people preferred to split into a multitude of political parties which were divided on a great many things and invariably the question of the defences of the nation was one of them. Consequently, half-hearted and lackadaisical measures were introduced which fell far short of what was required considering the seriousness of the political situation in Europe in the decade before 1914.
2. Social Conditions

For a small country the people of the Netherlands were unusually diverse. A Frisian farmer would barely be able to make himself understood in the Hague or Rotterdam, and the same was true for a farmer or fisherman from the province of Zeeland. And the dialects from these two provinces were so different that the people could not understand each other either. Customs, dress, and habits were also very varied. Monetary returns and social standing from a similar profession in different provinces were not the same. A mixed (dairy and grain) farmer from the province of Groningen would have a good income and a high social standing in his village; a similar type farmer with the same acreage in the province of Drente could only eke out a meagre living on the poor sandy soil of his province. In the occupational sector there were also distinct differences. Farmers and fishermen had very little in common, did not understand each other's problems and seldom had any social contact. Religion often created a very large barrier between people. The southern part of the nation, below the big rivers, was predominantly Roman Catholic, while the north was Protestant. At times the mistrust and dislike was only slightly less than had been the case during the time of the Reformation. Often this stemmed from ignorance and centuries of prejudice because many Protestants in small northern villages had never met a Roman Catholic, and the reverse was true for a Roman Catholic from the southern part of Limburg. The introduction of the train and steam tram, followed a little later by the bicycle (which
became very popular) did diminish the separation between city and country but there were still many areas which remained isolated. In addition to all these separations there were the ones common to all nations—between the rich and the poor, the educated and illiterate.

Perhaps a great many of these divisions were also present in other European countries at this time, but it is unlikely that there were so many, or that they went so deeply as was the case in the Netherlands. The Dutch were peculiar in this because they had been an independent nation for almost 300 years, had only one national language, and lived in such a small geographic area (31,850 sq. km.—12,441 sq. miles).  

Certain things were the same throughout the Netherlands, however; the agricultural labourer had a hard life whatever province he lived in. There were two types: the steady labourer and the day worker. The former usually lived in a house provided by the farmer and had employment year round; the latter always had to count on a few months unemployment during the winter and the family had to save enough during the summer to bridge this gap. With wages between 75 cents and one guilder a day (depending on area and length of working day) it was always a life of poverty.

The plight of the industrial labourer was no better than that of his agricultural counterpart. The days were long, the rewards small. Earnings of about 7 guilders a week were average. Housing was very poor indeed; the 1899 census showed that 23 per cent of the Dutch people lived in a one room house, and 31
per cent in a two room house. Social legislation before 1890 was of little significance; workers were expected to look after themselves. Trade unions before the turn of the century were not very strong, largely because "the movement" had splintered into various different groups. The main streams were Protestant, Roman Catholic and Socialist trade unions. The Socialists were the most active in demanding legislation in many fields, but not until 1888 did they elect a Socialist to the Second Chamber, and the Sociaal Democratische Arbeids Partij (SDAP) was not formed until 1894. The industrial workers were divided through their religious convictions, weakened by not having strong representation in parliament, and placed in a defensive position by the prevailing attitude that a man should be able to look after himself and not run to the government for help.

In 1874 a "Children's Law" had been passed, setting hours and conditions of work, but the law was wholly ineffective and widely disregarded. A new law in 1889 forbade children under 12 years of age to be employed; youths from age 12 to 15 (and women) could not work longer than 11 hours a day and not at night or on Sunday. The arguments in favour of these laws had been that children could not bargain for themselves and needed to be protected, but it was the thin edge of the wedge which eventually would make parliament responsible for the social conditions within the nation. The process was hastened when in 1887 property or tax qualifications for voting privileges were lowered.
Until 1887 only 150,000 people were allowed to vote; the new law of that year doubled this number. When a further re-adjustment was made in 1896 about 600,000 people were allowed to vote. Most men realized that there was now no logical reason any more to withhold the vote from anyone for reason of property or tax qualifications, but a number of conservative politicians refused to accept the SDAP's demand that manhood suffrage be introduced. Since this required a change in the Constitution for which a two-third majority of the Chamber was necessary, the opponents of manhood suffrage managed to prevent its introduction until 1917.

More people voting meant more political parties in the Netherlands (after the 1918 elections, 17 political parties were represented in the Second Chamber). Each small group, be it based on religious convictions, economic advantage, regional concern, class interest, or even personal pique thought it had to have representation in parliament. That governing such a nation with democratic methods became an endless compromise is obvious, even more so when the character of the people is considered. The main traits of the Dutch national character were a critical attitude, incessant complaining (kankeren), lack of impulsive action, strong individualism, conservatism, stubbornness, religiosity (as manifested in the large number of churches, sects and revival groups), an entrepreneurial spirit, and strong interest in retaining one's property. Life within a small circle was preferred, the family played a very important role, allegiance to a community, city, or small area was
quite strong but bonds in wider spheres were easily broken and loyalties switched from one to another. To govern such a people was not easy and the parliamentary system incorporating all the diverse interests seldom provided the most efficient leadership.

3. The Political Situation

Political power in the Netherlands rested with the Second Chamber. The Queen still carried much authority by virtue of tradition and her own personality, but she reigned and did not rule. The First Chamber—elected by the provincial governments—was more a check on hasty action by the Second Chamber than an effective governing body. The latter had 100 members, was elected by the direct, preferential voting system which made it possible for even small parties to get representation in Parliament. With the increase in voters came an increase in the number of parties. In the 1901 elections, for instance, the right-wing (the religious) parties obtained a majority made up of 25 Roman Catholics (RKSP), 24 Anti-Revolutionair (ARP), a staunchly Calvinistic group, 7 Vrij Anti-Revolutionair, an off-shoot of the former who had split off for minor policy differences and personality conflicts, 1 Christelijke-Historische, a conservative who had left the ARP, and one Friesche Christelijke-Historische who would not join the other because only he could take care of the special needs of his province. The left consisted of 7 Sociaal-Democraten (SDAP),
9 Vrijzinnig-Democraten (somewhere between the liberals and socialists), 18 Unie-LiberaLEN and 8 Vrij-LiberaLEN.

To lump the liberals, socialists and vrijzinnige together as "the Left" is really not quite accurate because there were fundamental differences. The vrijzinnige were evolutionary, monarchists and nationalists, egalitarian in so far that they held all parties and groups to be equally important. The SDAP held the workers' class to be above all others in importance, was against any defence expenditure, in fact wanted to abolish the army and navy, was internationalistic instead of nation­alist, and favoured a republican type government and there­fore was in principle against the royal house although in practice little was said against the Queen.15 The liberals were slightly to the right of the vrijzinnige (who had split off the liberal party earlier) and did not want, for instance, manhood suffrage as demanded by the vrijzinnige and the socialists.

That "politics makes strange bed fellows" was especially true in the Netherlands. In 1891 Dr. Abraham Kuyper, leader of the ARP wrote that his party and the Catholics could never work together because "of the blood of the martyrs...and that clever grey headed man in Rome who pretends to be the repre­sentative of Christ on earth".16 But when the Queen asked Kuyper to form a government in 1901, he accepted even though he had to take 3 Roman Catholic ministers in his cabinet. The Anti-Revolutionaire Partij and the Roman Catholics now viewed the left as an ungodly force out to destroy the God-given
state as now constituted.\textsuperscript{17} Probably more important was the fact that both religious parties wanted state subsidies for their respective schools.

Such coalition governments were quite common in the Netherlands; no party was ever strong enough to form a majority government. Subsequently, a government was always a coalition government, sometimes from three or four parties, with all the weaknesses thereof. Parties, whether part of the Government or the Opposition, seldom adhered to the line adopted by their side of the Chamber; votes were cast according to the individual's or party's view of the proposed legislation. Frequently personal friendships, or a desire for revenge, or some other private matter determined a Member's vote.

After the 1913 election it was not even possible to form a coalition government. The left had a majority of seats (the SDAP had made the greatest gain, from 7 to 18 seats) but was still divided in four parties. The SDAP refused on principle to become part of any government and after a few futile attempts to form a government the Queen instructed Cort van der Linden, an ex-liberal Minister of Justice to form an "extra-parliamentair" government. The men who finally agreed to accept posts in the cabinet were considered to be vrijzinnig and were willing to carry out the election program of the left--manhood suffrage and old age pension. It was thus in the interest of the left-wing majority of the Chamber to support this Cabinet. That a few cabinet ministers were not elected members of parliament was not unusual in Dutch politics; that all were
"extra-parliamentair" was, but in Dutch politics much was possible. The new Premier declared that his cabinet was based "on the will of the people" since the left had obtained a clear majority of votes and the men now forming the government would carry out the wishes of the majority.\textsuperscript{18} It was this government that guided the Netherlands through four years of mobilization.

4. Foreign Policy

Regardless which political side formed the government in the 50 years before 1914, one constant had remained and all parties had adhered to it—the Netherlands practised a (passive) policy of strict neutrality. When in 1867 the government sent a note to Russia condemning treatment of the Poles, the public outcry and uproar in parliament was tremendous and resulted in the resignation of the minister responsible for sending the note. A similar storm of protest arose ten years later over a note to Turkey protesting the treatment of its Russian subjects.\textsuperscript{19} Even during the Boer War, with Dutch national sentiment highly aroused and very much on the side of the Boers, no one suggested that the Netherlands should actively take the side of the Boers. When in 1900 the government sent a warship to bring the aged President of the Republic, Paul Kruger, to Europe out of his exile in the Portuguese colony of Lourenzo Marquer, England was first consulted. Only after the Dutch knew that Great Britain had no objections was the
Public opinion was more than satisfied with this action of the government and pro-Boer sentiment safely expended itself in cheering Kruger wherever he appeared in the Netherlands. The Dutch government did offer to mediate between the Boers and British but when the latter rejected the offer no more was done for the small nation which had such close ties with the Netherlands.

During Kuyper's ministry (1901-1905) there were numerous rumours that the Netherlands was abandoning its position of neutrality to take sides in the European alliance system. Kuyper's pro-German sentiments were well known and his travels to foreign capitals kept speculation at a high level. Especially during his visit to Berlin in 1905 German newspapers were full of stories about a Dutch-German alliance. Nothing has been found in the archives, however, and the only evidence that Kuyper seriously considered such a move is a letter from him to Queen Wilhelmina discussing the advantages and disadvantages of such an alliance. The Queen reacted very strongly against any departure from neutrality and the subject was dropped.

During these years a movement began to bring the Netherlands and Belgium together. The Dutch general J.J.C. den Beer Poortugaal and Eugène Bare, editor of the Brussels newspaper Le Petit Bleu were the major exponents of this plan. A committee was formed which met for a few years but by 1911 the whole idea had petered out for lack of official and public interest. The Dutch government was not interested because Belgian protectionist ideas could not be reconciled with the free trade
principle adhered to by the Dutch, and in any event the idea of union clashed with traditional Dutch neutrality. Many people questioned whether Belgium could accept a closer union with the Netherlands without first discussing it with the guarantors of her neutrality, France and Great Britain.  

In September 1909 the government, acting on a five year old report of a parliamentary committee which had investigated the coastal defences, proposed to spend 40 million guilders to modernize the forts at Kijkduin, Ymuiden, Hoek van Holland, and Harssens, and to build a new fort at Vlissingen (Flushing). Immediately a storm blew up in the Entente press. It charged that the Dutch were acting under German pressure, that the Flushing fort would prevent the British fleet from aiding Antwerp in case Belgium was attacked and that this was a violation of the 1839 agreement whereby the Netherlands was to treat the Scheldt as neutral water and not place obstacles, real or potential, in the way of the guarantors of Belgian neutrality. British inquiries as to Dutch intentions and whether or not they acted under German pressure tended to be of a private nature, but in France the Chambre des Deputés discussed the Flushing fort on January 16, 1911.  

The Dutch government, painfully surprised by all this unexpected foreign criticism, withdrew the proposal in 1910 before the Second Chamber had a chance to discuss it. A French suggestion that the 1839 agreement dealing with the Scheldt should be reviewed by the guarantors of Belgian
neutrality was accepted by the Netherlands but was never acted upon. The Dutch compensated for their supposedly pro-German attitude by concentrating half their field army on the German border during the Second Morocco Crisis in 1911 and the Dutch Foreign Minister assured the British Ambassador that the Dutch people would staunchly defend themselves against a German attack. A Landweer Law was passed in parliament in 1912, increasing the size of the army. The ease with which the bill passed suggests that parliament was eager to show the Entente powers that the Netherlands was not neglecting her eastern border as had been charged in the Entente press. Only after all this was the greatly reduced bill for coastal defence re-introduced in parliament; the government asked for (and got) 12 million guilders. The fort at Flushing was never built; when the Great War began only the foundations were ready.

The eagerness with which the Dutch government and people tried to please the Entente powers was a clear example of how the Netherlands wanted to be impartial to all. The Netherlands was a satiated nation; it had come to rest, and now it viewed the whole world as if it also was at rest. Every Dutchman could read extensive articles about world affairs in his newspapers, but he never seemed to ask himself how matters in foreign countries could affect him. He appeared convinced, as the government seemed convinced, that nothing would happen to the Netherlands if it kept out of all alliances and treaties and dealt equally fair with all countries. Nor did
it seem necessary to the people of the Netherlands to prepare and maintain adequate forces to protect their beloved independence and guard against the possibility that neighbouring countries, involved in a war, might find it essential to violate Dutch neutrality.

5. The Military

Anti-militarism had for centuries been part of the Dutch national character. Under Prince Maurice the Dutch army had reached its zenith; under William III (1672-1702) a short renaissance took place, but thereafter the military might of the Netherlands had steadily deteriorated. During "the French period" (as the Dutch call the occupation under Napoleon) soldiers became detested and the stigma then attached had not yet worn away by the beginning of the 20th century. The mobilization in 1870 had clearly shown that defences and defenders were incapable of fulfilling their task, but nothing had been done. For almost 30 years the military urged the government to end what it considered to be the biggest evil—the replacement system. This system made it possible for the one who had been selected by lot to serve in the militia to buy a replacement. Only the better classes of society could use this privilege and the army was thus fed recruits from the poorer classes, adding another stigma. When in 1898 General Eland in his function as Minister of War (up to 1910 this position was always filled by a retired or actively serv-
ing officer) proposed a major modernization for the army, his proposals were voted down. Only the archaic replacement system was ended, and even then the Roman Catholic party voted solidly against because "they feared the demoralizing influence of the barracks". Apparently it did not matter if the poorer people were influenced.

The period from 1898 to 1913 was marked by a great deal of political conflict over the defence question. It took 4 ministries, 8 ministers of war, and 15 years before a few modest reforms were implemented. The Militia Law of 1901 increased the yearly number of conscripts from 10,400 to 16,900 and fixed the serving time in the militia at 5 years. An initial training period for the infantry of 8-1/2 months (always from March to November) with 12 weeks re-training divided into 3 periods over the remaining 4 years was deemed sufficient to create a good army. After 5 years in the militia, conscripts automatically became members of the landweer which meant one yearly inspection and 6 training days per year.

All this was little enough as far as providing adequate defence forces—a mobilized army of 170,000 men, 75,000 in the field army, the remainder for fortress and border service, administration and supply—but it had increased defence costs and this became a contested issue in the 1905 elections. One of the hotly discussed questions was the number of soldiers which should be kept in the barracks from November to March (when the new drafts reported) to do the necessary chores and
maintenance. In 1901 this so-called blijvend gedeelte (remaining portion) had been fixed at 7,500 and these men, chosen by lot, had to serve for 12 months. The politicians thought this number much too high and the cost too great; it was suggested that a number of camps be closed for the winter to save even further on the defence budget.

In the 1905 Speech from the Throne the new government promised to reduce defence costs through the novel method of demanding only a 4 month training period for those who came into the army physically fit and had fulfilled the pre-entrance conditions stipulated by the army. This, of course, was eagerly grasped by the better classes to save themselves 4-1/2 months of greatly disliked service time. The following year another measure was introduced to save money; the number of men forced to stay during the winter was reduced to 2,000 and if additional chores had to be done civilians would be hired for this. The (professional) officers were extremely angry with these two measures and the Inspector of Cavalry resigned in disgust.

The "military question" was now debated throughout the Netherlands. Army officers pointed to France and Germany where the percentage of professionals in the army was higher, the number of conscripts per capita of the population larger, and the training period for the new drafts longer than in the Netherlands. In political circles the argument was forwarded that the Netherlands should adopt a "people's army" (volks leger) on the Swiss model. This would mean a conscription
army wherein everyone would serve; a short initial training period augmented with local military exercises; physical training programs for youths; very short re-training sessions; new conscripts and NCOs to be trained by older draftees so that the professional core could be kept as small as possible. Constant argument between the proponents of the "Prussian system" and the "Swiss system" brought no solution for the Netherlands, but everyone became involved in the discussion. In April 1905 the Queen had already written Premier Kuyper that she thought the 8-1/2 month training period too short and had suggested a 12 month period. If there was not enough money available for this perhaps a smaller, but better trained army would be the solution for the Netherlands. When in 1906 the "remaining portion" had been reduced from 7,500 to 2,000 the Queen wrote the new Premier and demanded an explanation.

On January 17, 1907, Premier de Meester explained the government's position to the Queen. He wrote that in view of article 180 of the Constitution (every able man has a duty to maintain the independence of the nation and defend its territory) it was best to continue on the present path. Already different classes were serving in the army (because of the 1898 law) and this brought a good intercourse among the classes. These young men would go back to society knowing more about each other and about the necessity of defending their country. As more and more of these young men passed through the army the general mood of the country would change. Eventually a general conscription would make all the people
part of the country's defence. This so-called volks leger, if financially possible, was the best answer for the Netherlands.  

It would be a long time before the general mood of the Netherlands was changed, however. These discussions in parliament only dealt with finances; the fighting ability of the troops and the necessary weapons were not even mentioned. The Socialists were loud in their criticism; they maintained that the Netherlands could not defend herself against any big power anyway, so what was the point of spending all this money. The Liberals and Vrijzinnige felt about the same but were less vocal in their opposition. Constant criticism in and out of parliament about "barbaric training methods" and "Prussian drill tactics" forced the army to simplify its drill movements, lessen the number of watches, cut out all big parades except on the Queen's birthday, and allow military clubs for officers and NCOs.

In 1910 Colijn became Minister of War—the first civilian to hold that post. An able parliamentarian and a forceful personality, he cleverly used the foreign criticism about the fort at Flushing, and parliament's desire to appear strictly neutral, to get a landweer law passed in 1912 and a Landstorm law in 1913 which brought some improvements for the army. The draft was increased to 22,400 men per year, militia service was increased to 6 years and thereafter 5 years in the landweer. Then the men became automatically members of the landstorm which made them eligible until their 40th year
for call-up in a second mobilization. The army was now also
given the right to appoint men for NCO and officer training
(which meant an extra 12 months service for the former and
14-1/2 months for the latter), in an effort to provide better
leadership. Up to now the army could not appoint men to
train for a higher rank and since few of the more educated
men wanted to remain one day longer than necessary in the
army there was always a chronic shortage of good leaders.
Total mobilized strength of the army would now come to 16
cavalry squadrons and 120 infantry battalions whereas in
1898 it had been 15 squadrons and 54 battalions. 38

The new laws were supposed to correct the shortcomings
pointed out by the Committee of Defence which was instituted
in 1908 to answer two questions: 1. What is the purpose of
our defence system? 2. How well does it fulfill that purpose?
The answer had been that the army should defend the country,
and also be capable of acting offensively, if necessary out-
side the Dutch borders. The latter was out of the question,
however. In relation to other countries the training period
was too short, there were almost no professional soldiers;
after ten years of experimentation the Netherlands did not have
an effective army, it was not well trained, the discipline
was poor, the men could hardly march properly, and the pro-
fessional soldiers lacked self-confidence and a sense of
responsibility. Especially on manoeuvres it showed that train-
ing, tactics and discipline were not at all up to standard. 39
The "Laws of Colijn" (as they came to be called) did not really correct the shortcomings pointed out in the Committee of Defence report. Six years in the militia still only called for an active training period of 8-1/2 months and a few days each year thereafter. The five years in the landweer meant a 6 days training period in one year and a one day equipment inspection in each of the other 4 years. For those who had a rank the total training days numbered 15 in five years, and any one training period could not exceed 9 days. The landstorm law was not very useful either. Everyone who was physically fit and not serving in the militia or landweer was in the landstorm. There was thus a "trained" reserve--those who had served in the militia and landweer, had been volunteers, or had been in the army in the Dutch East Indies; and there was an "untrained" reserve, those who had never been in military service at all. All these men, up to age 40, could be called up in case a second mobilization was necessary, but this would obviously occur only when the army (of the first mobilization) could not cope with the enemy. Considering the size of the Netherlands, there would be little of the country not occupied by the enemy, and there certainly would not be enough time to retrain the "trained" portion of the landstorm, not to mention train the "untrained" portion. For the Dutch politicians, however, passing the laws gave the appearance that the volks leger was one step closer to reality, and that was enough for them.
That a yearly call up of 22,400 twenty year-olds did not tax a nation with a population of about 6 million overly much is obvious. The figure was arrived at in the following manner: each year about 55,000 youths reached the age they were to be conscripted; certain categories were automatically excluded, e.g. if the older brother(s) had served, if he was studying for the ministry or a religious occupation, if he was an unfit character, if the family could not survive financially without him (often the case in large, poor families), or if he was the breadwinner of the family. Then followed the disqualifications for medical reasons and the abnormally high percentage of youths found unfit for service indicates that the general health of certain classes of the population was not very good. In 1913, 38.8 per cent was declared medically unfit for service; in 1914 it was even higher, 42.1 per cent. In 1914 the total number of conscripts fit for service and not exempted was 26,000. Only 3,600 were thus given their "freedom" by lot.

As long as the notion was maintained that conscripts should not serve longer than 8-1/2 months, it was impossible to build up a real standing army. The professional soldiers were few and were kept busy training the new recruits. The "standing" army was thus barely 30,000 strong, and of this number 22,400 were really recruits.

To a certain extent the army depended upon the ancient schutterijen to augment the ranks in case of danger. The idea dated back to the schutters guilds of the 18th century but by the 19th century they had fallen in disuse. In 1867
they had been restored by royal order, had been given rifles and ammunition by the army and were allowed to use the army rifle ranges. After 1870 they degenerated into social clubs interested only in the social aspect and in competition shooting matches during the summer. During the Boer War they regained a certain measure of popularity. In 1900 there were 130 societies with 11,295 members. The army tried to interest them in having field manoeuvres with the army but this did not please many people and by 1910 there were only 21 societies with 896 members who bothered to participate in the organized manoeuvres of that summer. The army expected that in return for the weapons, ammunition and ranges supplied during all these years the societies would join as units in case of mobilization. There were no definite commitments on the part of the societies, however. When mobilization came in 1914 no societies joined and only 2 per cent of the members volunteered for the army as individuals.\footnote{44}

That the weapons and equipment of the Dutch army were insufficient and woefully outdated goes almost without saying. Cannons cost money and parliament was not about to provide it. It reasoned that weapons which were bought would only become outdated and be superseded by others. Fortifications were also badly in need of repair and modernization, but little had been done even though the whole plan of defence for the Netherlands rested on fixed defences based on forts and large inundations with Amsterdam as center.\footnote{45} In 1898 the modernization of the defences of Amsterdam was already in progress,
but the yearly allowed expenditures were so small that the project would never be completed. A bill to provide sufficient funds was rejected by the Second Chamber in 1907. In spite of the outdated forts and old fashioned weapons, the country at large believed the *Stelling Holland* invincible if 3 to 7 days grace were given to get the mobilized army within the fortress lines and to carry out the inundations. Considering how the "invincible" fortresses in Belgium fell during the Great War, it is obvious that the Dutch faith in their defences was an illusion. Even had most Dutch people been aware of the inadequacy of their defences, they would not have cared very much. They did not care for things military, believed that their country would be spared involvement in a war as long as neutrality was adhered to, and resented any expenditures on military objectives. The Dutch indifference towards their national defence was so obvious that foreign observers noticed it and wondered about it. The Belgian ambassador to the Netherlands (from 1903 to 1910) wrote in 1906 that he was perplexed over the indifferent and carefree attitude found in all levels of society regarding the consequences for the Netherlands should war break out in which Germany, France, and Great Britain took part. Money had become the great ideal in the Netherlands and people preferred to neglect investigations of international affairs for fear certain financial sacrifices had to be made in order to guarantee the safety of the nation. The British military attaché to the Netherlands wrote in his 1907 year-report
that the Dutch had a "marvellous love of money and for individual well-being" which led in growing measure to apathy in the question of the nation's defence. 48

The foreign observers might have exaggerated slightly, but generally speaking they were correct. The army officers who pointed to the weak spots in the Dutch defences were not listened to, and the civilians who did care about the defences of the nation were not powerful enough politically or economically to change the existing situation. The majority of the Dutch nation was much too concerned with the pursuit of financial gain, or too involved in internal quarrels to worry about events taking place outside the Dutch borders. The army was considered an object of squandered money by those who paid the taxes, a wasted year by those conscripted, an evil institution by mothers who believed their sons would come under bad influence, and the means by which capitalists maintained their power by the socialists.

With such existing attitudes towards their army, so much complacency towards questions of national defence, and so much ill-founded confidence in their neutrality the Dutch people entered the July month of 1914. The shock was therefore all the greater when war appeared inevitable and the nation was faced with a situation for which it had not prepared materially or mentally.
Chapter II
August, September, October, 1914

1. Mobilization and the Plan of Defence

The rapidity of events in July 1914 caught the Netherlands, as well as every other country in Europe by surprise. Not until July 27 did the Dutch really become alarmed by the developments in Europe and begin to act: the Queen moved to the Hague in order to be available for immediate consultation; the Chief of Staff of the army returned home from his vacation in Denmark; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Louden, called the Belgian Ambassador, Fallon, and asked about the Belgian plans for defence in case they were attacked. Louden suggested that the two nations pool information and resources since a German attack in Liège would probably pass over Dutch Limburg in order to avoid the forts around Liège. In the following days Louden repeatedly pressed for an answer pointing out that a joint defence of the Meuse River was vitally important. Fallon did not have an answer, however. The Belgian government refused to discuss military strategy unless her neutrality was actually infringed upon.¹

That the Dutch approached Belgium with a plan for military cooperation is indicative of how worried they were and how fully they expected an attack from the Germans. Previously there had been discussions between the military of the two small nations, but they had been non-committal, desultory and of no significance largely because the Dutch had little
interest in them. They had viewed active military cooperation as a departure from their traditional neutrality.²

Now the Dutch were afraid and they tried everything to stave off a possible invasion. On the day Louden contacted the Belgian Ambassador, the cabinet also decided to keep the militia troops who were to go home on August 1 in active service for an indefinite period.

The following day, July 28, another past oversight was rectified: the cabinet asked the Queen for permission to appoint a Commander in Chief of the armed forces. By some strange quirk of reasoning the Dutch government had always insisted that it was better not to have a Commander in Chief armed forces, nor a Commander in Chief army, in peace time—the army Chief of Staff had always been expected to look after the latter's responsibilities. Now that war threatened, it suddenly became important to have a military leader so the 62 year old Lt-General C.J. Snijders, Chief of Staff of the army, was asked to accept the appointment of Commander in Chief armed forces and to combine it with his present function. He was also promoted to full general. Snijders was willing to accept, but on condition that he be responsible to the government and not simply to the Ministers of War and Marine as had previously been the case. The cabinet agreed to this stipulation, not realizing that this could put the two ministers in a very difficult position; they were responsible for their departments, but the man who actually ran these departments (the army and navy) was only responsible to the government.³
During the cabinet meetings of July 30—the day after the Austrian troops crossed the Serbian border—it was decided to call up the coast and frontier guards the next day, to issue a mobilization order for August 1, to send out a proclamation that no foreign war ships would be allowed in Dutch ports, and to publish a Declaration of Neutrality.

On August 1, the Netherlands began its mobilization; Germany declared war on Russia; France issued its mobilization order at 1545 hours and Germany at 1600 hours.

The Dutch government finally awoke to the fact (which had long been obvious to Dutch military leaders) that in a large scale European war her geographic location was of great strategic importance. She controlled the mouths of the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt Rivers; she had many excellent harbours on the North Sea the possession of which was important for both Germany and Great Britain; she bordered for hundreds of kilometers on Germany's weakly protected western border; and she jutted far south with a thin strip of land which protected a part of Belgium from immediate invasion from Germany. It is unlikely that the Dutch military commanders knew about the German Schlieffen Plan, but it was generally suspected in military circles that if Germany ever attacked France, it would be through Belgium and Dutch Limburg. It is not very surprising therefore that when in the winter of 1913-1914 General Snijders wrote out a map exercise for his senior officers which supposed a German attack on France, it proved to correspond almost exactly to the plan followed by
the Germans in August and September 1914.\textsuperscript{5}

That the Germans did not come through Dutch Limburg as originally envisioned by Schlieffen was largely due to his successor von Moltke. He, unlike Schlieffen, believed the Dutch would try to prevent the passage of German troops, and would probably allow British troops to enter the Netherlands to help them. Also, Moltke believed that a neutral Netherlands was a necessity as an economic windpipe through which Germany could breath when engaged in a war on two fronts.\textsuperscript{6}

Whatever plans the Germans (or anyone else) might have had against the Netherlands, the Dutch had only one way of countering it---all-around defence. Since 1908 the General Staff had only concentrated on this one plan; the possibility that the Netherlands might join one side to attack the other was not even considered.\textsuperscript{7} The plan was quite simple. Of the roughly 200,000 men in the mobilized army, about half were part of the field army which consisted of 4 infantry divisions (of 18 battalions each) and 4 cavalry regiments.\textsuperscript{8} Along the borders and the coasts thinly held posts were to check small enemy infiltrations. If the enemy attacked in strength, the border patrols were to withdraw inland to where the field army was situated. This was to be a centrally strategic location from where attacks could be mounted in all directions to meet the incoming enemy. If the enemy proved too strong, the army was to withdraw within the \underline{Stelling Holland}. By this time inundations would have made the approaches impassable (except for a few high areas guarded by
forts) and the field army could join the fortress troops in a concerted defence.\(^9\)

The inundated area of the Stelling was carefully chosen. It began by the Zuider Zee southeast of Amsterdam, proceeded in a generally southwardly direction, included the city of Utrecht within the Stelling and reached the junction of the Waal and Meuse Rivers east of Gorinchem. Except for a few small areas south of the big rivers (in Noord Brabant), and parts of the province of Zeeland, the Stelling line went west with the rivers to the sea. Only the provinces of Noord and Zuid Holland and part of Utrecht were thus protected, but this was the area with the densest population, greatest industry and busiest trade. The inundated area was 5 to 6 kilometers wide; the water met naturally higher ground on the enemy side so it could not be drained away easily, but was held by dykes on the Stelling side. The water was obtained through sluices in river and sea dykes and could be accurately regulated from within the Stelling: this was important because only about one foot or so of water should cover the ground. Much more than this would allow the enemy to use flat bottom boats. The depth was sufficient to cover the multitude of large and small ditches which crisscrossed the inundated areas from view and thus made crossing by infantry a very hazardous operation while heavy equipment could not be brought through at all.\(^{10}\)

Unfortunately for the Dutch, not everything went according to plan in August 1914. For the field army to be effective, it had to act as one unit; but if this was done, the coast would have to be left unguarded for long stretches because
there were not enough men to cover it. Consequently, one division had to be stationed along the North Sea coast. Of the remaining three divisions, one was stationed along the Rhine and Yssel Rivers (facing Germany), one was placed in the province of Noord Brabant, and the fourth was kept in reserve on the Veluwe. There could thus be no question of a concentrated attack on an invading enemy; at best two divisions could slow down his advance. The three northern provinces (Groningen, Friesland, Drente) could not be defended at all by the field army. As a surrogate measure some territorial troops under a separate command were placed there to combat weak enemy infiltrations.

An even greater shortcoming in the Dutch defences became visible shortly after Germany invaded Belgium. The heavy German artillery had a much greater accurate range than had been anticipated by the Dutch army officers. The 5 to 6 kilometer wide inundated area proved too narrow. Effectively aimed artillery fire could now bombard the old, largely above ground fortresses guarding the high-ground approaches to the Stelling Holland. The Dutch had little defence against this; adequate artillery to silence enemy guns was not available and heavy industry to produce such cannons the Dutch did not possess.
2. The Condition of the Army

The mobilization of the Dutch armed forces was successfully completed in two days; on the evening of August 2, 90 to 100 per cent of all militia and landweer troops were at their destination. There had been no band playing, no flagwaving, and no women and children throwing flowers as in other countries. For the Dutch there was no such thing as a "frisscher, fröhlicher krieg". But there was no sign of the latent anti-militarism so typical of the nation; everyone realized the seriousness of the situation and did what he could do to help. The shortages of military barracks necessitated quartering soldiers in civilian homes; this was taken in stride as was the requisitioning of horses, cars, a few trucks, and dogs (to pull the light machine guns). On trains and street cars military had priority and civilians had to wait. By August 3—the day Belgium refused passage to the German armies who invaded that evening—all strategic places within the Netherlands were manned, river and sea estuaries were mined where necessary, as were the roads and railway bridges leading to Germany.

Once the army was in position the shortages in equipment really became noticeable. The army possessed 2,000 (all calibres) artillery pieces but only 600 were modern rapid-fire cannons. Of these, 160 were in the fortifications and for coastal defence. There were only 240 modern pieces of 7.5 cm. field artillery, of which 156 were ready for service. In contrast, one German army corps (about 44,000 men) had 144
pieces of heavy artillery and 16 batteries of heavy howitzers. The Dutch possessed 780 machine guns, but 570 were old, cumbersome, and virtually useless. Only 32 modern, light machine guns (using rifle ammunition) were ready for service. The ammunition reserve was equally deplorable: for the modern artillery pieces only 700 shots per cannon were available: there were 80 million rounds for the rifles and the light machine guns. The army air arm had 4 airplanes and no industry within the country was capable of building any. Rifle ammunition was produced in the Netherlands in limited quantity, but artillery shells were not. Eventual production was possible if the raw materials could be procured abroad.

Equally depressing was the condition of the soldiers' personal equipment. A few years earlier the army had optimistically decided that the militia should take its uniforms home when not on active duty so that everyone could return in uniform in case of a mobilization while at the same time the army would save storage space. The result of this was now visible to everyone: boots had been worn to work, uniforms had also been worn and were patched in many places, some men had no socks and underwear anymore. The magazines were virtually empty so little could be replaced; consequently the army was already poorly dressed and equipped before it even went into battle.

Even more serious was the shortage of good leaders. There was a "book" shortage of 570 officers and 540 non-
commissioned officers. But since the 1915 draft was also called into service (by a special bill through parliament on August 3), and some of the older landweer drafts badly needed to be retrained, the actual shortage was 700 officers and 1,600 NCOs. The few officers and NCOs from the army in the Dutch East Indies who happened to be on leave in the Netherlands, and the retired officers and NCOs willing to return to active duty, could not possibly alleviate the shortage.

During the first few weeks the shortage of leaders, the scruffy uniforms, the poor quarters, etc., did not matter very much. Everyone was cooperating and making the best of a bad situation. Treub, the Minister of Agriculture, Trade and Commerce, later described the mood at this time as "the spirit of August"—a feeling of togetherness, toleration and cooperation which had not existed in the nation for a long time (and would soon depart again).

The "spirit of August" was not strong enough to overcome the aversion for military service. On August 3 the government asked for volunteers for either the field army or the vrijwillige landstorm. Any one from age 17 to 50 medically fit was eligible. Only 2,000 volunteered while there were 600,000 Dutchmen between the ages 17 to 40 who were not in military service.

That the vrijwillige landstorm was such a sad failure was in part the fault of the government and army leaders.
Hastily conceived and insufficiently prepared, the idea had been to enroll civilians in each locality, train them a few hours a week and so create a large number of trained men from whom the army could draw, or who could independently defend their own locality. Instead, the whole idea became a disaster (at least in the first few months). There were no uniforms available and if the volunteers wanted them they had to buy them. The men were told to train in dark civilian clothes and wear a wide orange band around their hats. This made them look slightly silly, and also superpatriotic which caused no end of comments by others not so inclined. Sometimes it took months before rifles were issued. No officers or NCOs could be spared to train the men properly. Discipline was non-existent and the shortage of leadership was such that a few communities placed advertisements in newspapers asking for a man "willing and competent" to act as commander of their local unit.\(^{22}\) The diversity within even a single community was frequently so great that cooperation in establishing a vrijwillige landstorm was virtually non-existent. In one small city there were seven separate volunteer landstorm units who each used the same field to practise on, but who refused to combine for regional and personal prejudices.\(^{23}\) Similarly, of all the schutterijen only seven volunteered for the landstorm; all the others wanted to remain independent, not tied to the military hierarchy or to any kind of control from outside. They practised a typically Dutch "stubborn individualism."\(^{24}\)
3. Position of the Government

While the army prepared itself for the expected war, the government anxiously tried to discover the intentions of Britain and Germany. Good news arrived on the evening of August 2 when Ambassador Gevers wired from Berlin that Moltke personally had assured him that Germany would not violate Dutch neutrality. The assurance was repeated the following morning by the German ambassador in the Hague. That same afternoon (August 3) Fallon, the Belgian Ambassador approached Louden and requested cooperation between the commander of Liège and the Dutch commander of Maastricht. Germany had demanded passage of her troops over Belgian territory and since this had been refused a German attack was expected shortly. Louden answered that the Netherlands could not do so without giving up its neutrality and therefore had to refuse the request. At 1400 hours, August 4, Louden telephoned Fallon and informed him that as long as Britain was neutral the Netherlands would not prevent British warships and troop ships from sailing up the Scheldt to Antwerp provided Belgium wanted this aid. What was the position of the Belgian government? Before Belgium had answered, the British ultimatum to Germany ran out (at 2300 hours August 4) putting her at war with Germany.

The following morning the cabinet instructed General Snijders to prepare the Scheldt for defence—to remove beacons and mine the entrance so that only Dutch pilots could bring ships in—and if necessary to use force in
The warning in the British message was clear. The Netherlands was to treat Germany and Britain exactly alike and not favour one over the other. But at least for the time being the Netherlands seemed safe from invasion, especially so since Prime Minister Asquith declared in Parliament on the evening of August 6:

We are fighting to vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed, in defiance of international good faith, by the arbitrary will of a strong and overmastering power.

While the government had passively waited to see what the foreign powers decided, it had been very active in solving a number of urgent domestic problems. As early as July 28 the Amsterdam Stock Exchange had closed its doors on its own initiative. The Dutch were quick to take action if finances were involved and the unsettled international situation had caused a drop in the market, so to prevent further losses the Exchange had been closed. The already jittery public had taken this as a sign that things were really going wrong and a run on the banks had resulted. Not only
was everyone withdrawing his money from the bank, but they were going straight to the food and clothing stores and buying all they could. The resulting shortages in the stores had driven prices up, while a number of storekeepers refused to sell their goods in the hope that prices would climb higher yet. Everyone also began to hoard metal money; no one wanted to pay with coins anymore. The resulting shortage caused great unrest among the workers who used little else but metal money (there was a one, and a two-and-a-half guilder coin in circulation). Many were always paid in metal money and the factories could not procure enough to pay their workers.

The government acted with speed. A meeting with banks and financiers provided an emergency loan of 200 million guilders for the country; the Exchange was not reopened (for another six months) but a government committee now supervised all major business transactions; any owner who refused to sell his stock at reasonable price to the public (or to retailers in the case of wholesalers) could have it expropriated by the government; cities and municipalities were given the right to print "paper coins" (zilverbons) which could be used as metal money and would be redeemable at a later date; an extra 50 million guilders was provided for the War Department to cover the initial cost of the mobilization; the 1915 draft was called up; an export prohibition on several articles (e.g. gold, grain, hay, horses) was passed.\(^32\)
When parliament met on August 3 (the Second Chamber had been in recess since June 25) all the actions taken by the cabinet were passed without discussion. The law forbidding certain exports was broadened so that the government could include or remove goods as it deemed necessary. The "spirit of August" was very much present in the Second Chamber; even the leader of the SDAP, P.J.Troelstra, did not blame the government for the present international situation, stated that the present mobilization was necessary, and promised support (with reservations) for the government in the future. The SDAP even voted in favour of the 50 million guilders mobilization credits even though—in a remarkable contradiction—they continued to vote against the regular defence expenditures as they had always done.

With parliament willing to support the government, and the warring nations unwilling to invade the Netherlands, it might appear as if few problems could arise. Just the opposite happened. The export ban on grain imposed by the government had also included grain bought by German firms before the war but still in trans-shipment from Rotterdam to Germany. The reaction from Berlin was immediate and hostile. A great deal of diplomatic activity resulted which did not really end until the Netherlands had a sufficient reserve of grain again. At one point in August the country had only a two week supply and dough for bread was made partially with rice and potato flour. Britain also began to involve itself with Dutch exports to Germany. On August 20, and
again on October 29 the British government by Order in Council declared goods to be contraband if they could be re-exported from a neutral port to enemy territory. Neutral shipping was to be taken to a British port where the owner of the cargo was to produce proof that the cargo, neither in its original state nor after processing, would be exported to the enemy. The Dutch protest that this could well starve the Netherlands was disregarded.

Eventually a way was found to get around the difficulties with Great Britain. In November 1914 the Nederlandse Overzee Trustmaatschappij (N.O.T.) was organized; a private company under government supervision, it guaranteed that all imports consigned to it would not be re-exported to the enemy either in their original state or after processing. In time, the N.O.T. won the trust of the British, if not the Germans who viewed it as an economic weapon to boycott them.

Germany also had an effective weapon to force the Netherlands to do her bidding. Britain had her fleet, but Germany had coal and iron, both essential for the Netherlands. Thus the Germans introduced the barter system. Every German licence to export was valid only if the exporter imported some commodity required by Germany from the country to which the German exports went.

Throughout these difficulties the government tried to maintain as neutral a position as possible, but there is no denying that in the first few months of the war many people, and also a few cabinet ministers believed in the apparent
invincibility of the German army. Years later, Treub related how most ministers were willing to "give in" to German demands much quicker than to British demands, and were very afraid to take a strong stand against Germany.  

This became obvious in the two stormy cabinet discussions on October 1 and 3 when, for the first and only time during the war, proposals were made that the Netherlands should take action in relation to events happening outside her borders—actions which could bring her into the war. The topic was the imminent fall of Antwerp and the possible consequences for the Netherlands. If the Germans intended to retain Antwerp after the war, Rotterdam could be bypassed as the transit port for Germany, the Netherlands would be enclosed on two sides by Germany, and control of the Scheldt could well pass into German hands. The Netherlands would become in fact, if perhaps not in name, a vassal state of Germany.

Treub, the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry (later of Finance), suggested that a note be sent to Germany asking if the capture of Antwerp was purely a military objective or whether Germany planned to keep possession of the city when hostilities came to an end. Treub admitted that such a note could escalate into a correspondence which eventually could force the Netherlands into the war, but he thought this risk should be taken because even if the country did join the conflict it would be with the Entente and thus on the side which fought for the right of the little state to exist. Bosboom, the Minister of War, supported Treub and
added that the decision taken on August 5--closing the Scheldt to British warships--had been wrong and Germany should be informed that ships of those nations which had guaranteed Belgian neutrality in 1839 would now be allowed to travel unhindered up the Scheldt. Rambonnet, the Naval Minister, supported the other two and added another point. The present neutral position of the Netherlands left the country at the mercy of external developments and could bring her into a war as an ally of the side with which she did not sympathize. As an example he pointed out that a German army, pursued by an Entente army, could cross into the Netherlands under a white flag and would be interned, but the pursuing army, not heeding Dutch neutrality, would have to be prevented by force of arms from entering the Netherlands, thus putting the country at war with England and France. Rambonnet insisted that the Netherlands show the Germans that she was not indifferent to the future of Antwerp, and was willing to go to war over it. The time to make this decision was now because it was favourable for the Netherlands and unfavourable for Germany.

The majority of the cabinet did not wish to run the risk of getting the Netherlands involved in a war, however. They preferred a policy of "wait and see" and hoped that, somehow, it would all work out all right. Arguments were forwarded that the colonies could be lost, that the country would become a battleground like Belgium and that the Netherlands would, in the end, gain nothing. Britain had already said (on August 6) that it would not send warships up the Scheldt,
so obviously was not interested in relieving Antwerp via this route. Besides, it was too late to save the city now.

In short, the other ministers retained the ideas held prior to the war, namely, that if they did nothing and left everyone alone, everyone else would leave them alone. What the Netherlands should do now was maintain a position of strict neutrality, be fair and impartial to both sides, give no reason to doubt Dutch integrity and everyone would leave them in peace.

4. Unexpected Responsibilities for the Army

Army Headquarters made a number of fundamental mistakes in the first few months of mobilization. No wooden barracks were built to house the soldiers because it was to be a short war and therefore there was no need to spend all that money; only a few tent camps were constructed. In many places the men were placed in schools and other public buildings or in private homes. The owners of the latter received 20 cents a day to house a soldier and another 80 cents if they also had to feed him. Most civilians disliked having to take soldiers into their homes; they still associated it with the days long ago when it was used as punishment for not having paid their taxes. The Dutch clannishness also played a role; the closeness of family life allowed no room for a stranger and he was not really welcome. Discipline did not improve either by having the men spread all through
an area. At night they were free from supervision, as well as subject to (at times) bad influences from the people forced to put them up. Especially along the borders it soon proved a mistake to quarter troops in civilian homes.

The territorial troops stationed along the border were supposed to guard road and railway crossings to Germany and Belgium. With the outbreak of hostilities, prices had risen in Germany and Dutch export prohibitions made smuggling a very prosperous business. The regular number of custom officials proved much too small to curb the new "sport" (as many called it), so a number of territorial troops were sworn in as special police constables which gave them the power to arrest and charge smugglers. Since many of the territorials were stationed in or near their own municipality, and others were housed by a family dealing in goods for smugglers (or smuggled themselves), they did not prove very effective in ending the rapidly increasing practice of smuggling. The army was soon forced to assign troops from the field army to the border areas with the consequent weakening of that already widely dispersed force.

Part of the problem at first was that the army did not have very much authority in the border areas. Already on August 2 the Commander in Chief had asked the government to declare the whole nation in staat van oorlog (literally: state of war), and the fortress and border areas in staat van beleg (literally: state of siège). The former gave the military more authority "after consultation with the respon-
sible civil authorities"; the latter obliged the civil authorities to carry out the orders of the army, i.e., (a mild form of) martial law. The government was loath to give all that power to the military, however, unless absolutely necessary. On August 5 and 10 laws placed certain areas within the Stelling Holland and the southern provinces in staat van oorlog, but not until August 29 were a few municipalities along the southern border put in staat van beleg. On September 8 this was extended to the whole province of Limburg, most of Noord Brabant and all of Zeeuws Vlaanderen. Continued smuggling forced the government to place the whole eastern border in staat van beleg on September 25, and to extend this to the northern coast of Friesland and Groningen on November 10 and 21.

The southern border became the real danger point the further the German armies pushed into Belgium. By the middle of August more than half the Dutch field army (two divisions and one cavalry brigade) was stationed in the south. When the attack on Antwerp began, one-third of the First Division (which was guarding the coast in the provinces Noord and Zuid Holland) was also brought south. Army Headquarters was transferred from the Hague to 's-Hertogenbosch and from there to Oosterhout (north of Breda) where it remained for four years. Denuding part of the coast of defence forces had brought criticism in parliament but was deemed essential by Army Headquarters. Their sound judgment was proven when the trickle of Belgian refugees turned into a river.
The first refugees had been unwilling ones; from August 4 to 6 the Belgian government sent about 80,000 Germans living in Belgium out of the country and since they found it impossible to travel directly to Germany they came to the Netherlands. There was little problem looking after these people; special trains were provided to take them to Germany; those who wished to remain in the Netherlands for the time being were allowed to do so (a number of the latter had never lived in Germany). Most of the ones who remained returned to Belgium once the fighting had ceased.51

Belgian refugees, driven from their homes by the fighting, had entered the Netherlands from the beginning, but their numbers had been small and the municipalities along the border had looked after them. As the fighting neared Antwerp, however, the numbers increased and once the city was invested and consequently attacked the mass exodus to the Netherlands began. During the first week of October about 100,000 refugees arrived in the town of Roozendaal alone. Bergen op Zoom, with a population of 16,500 received 110,000 people, most of whom slept in the woods around the town. The immediate concern was to find food and shelter for these people so the army built tent camps, converted old factories and barracks, supplied blankets and emergency medical treatment. Field kitchens were set up to feed the people while military bakers and butchers moved in to alleviate the bread and meat shortage. Commercial establishments could not provide enough of the necessities of life, often because they
did not have sufficient staff, so soldiers were put to work in bakeries, stores, with wholesalers, retailers, etc. Transportation was arranged and special trains provided to send as many people as possible to the north so that the human flood (almost one million refugees entered the Netherlands) was evenly divided. By the middle of October there were 719,000 refugees in 831 (of the 1120) municipalities of the Netherlands. The army continued to care for those who stayed in the provinces of Limburg and Noord Brabant. 52

From the first the army had tried to weed out the suspicious looking characters among the refugees. Since there was no time to investigate every case, a special camp was built and those who were under suspicion were placed there. It was also necessary to keep a sharp eye out for Dutch profiteers. Now that the demand for all sorts of goods was so great, many stores, tradesmen and suppliers began to charge exorbitant prices for their goods. This tendency was nipped in the bud whenever possible.

With the fall of Antwerp, fighting in Belgium was confined to the established trenchline in the southwest and General Snijders contacted the German authorities to elicit their support in returning as many refugees as possible to their homeland. On his urging the German Governor of Belgium issued a proclamation that no one would be interned on return, no Belgian youths would be drafted into the German army, and no possessions would be taken away. A few well known Belgian political figures (e.g. the mayor of Antwerp) were
allowed to travel to the Netherlands to address many of the refugees in order to calm their fears and squash some of the fantastic rumours that circulated among them. Special trains for the journey home were arranged and Admiral Schroeder, Governor of Antwerp, issued passes for the Dutch officers on each train so that they could accompany it to its destination in Belgium.\textsuperscript{53} Out of the area of the Third Division alone, 427,000 refugees left for their homes between October 16, 1914 and June 1, 1915.\textsuperscript{54} Of the roughly one million refugees only about 100,000 remained in the Netherlands for the duration of the war. A number of them did not return to Belgium but left for Great Britain instead.

The fall of Antwerp also brought 35,000 Belgian and 1,500 British soldiers (and 200 Germans who were their prisoners) into the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{55} During the war these numbers increased to 1,751 British, 1,461 Germans, 8 French and 4 Americans, largely from flyers forced to land in the Netherlands, sailors from ships and submarines caught in Dutch waters and interned, and (in the case of the Germans) intentional border crossings and desertions.\textsuperscript{56} By June 1915, 15 camps had been built to house the various nationalities, separate camps for the officers and other ranks, and a special camp at Flushing for those men not wanted by their own comrades and therefore better off housed independently. The internees were clothed from Dutch army stores, paid the same as the equivalent rank in the Dutch army, and guarded by the Dutch army.\textsuperscript{57}
Deserters (all Germans) proved a special problem.
Initially the Dutch border detachments allowed a German soldier to go free once he declared that he was a deserter. The army worked on the assumption that such a man did not belong to the army of the belligerent power any more. As soon as the Minister of War heard of this, he overruled the army authorities and ordered such men to be interned until a full investigation was completed. If they said they were deserters but had no proof, they were to be interned in the camp in Alkmaar with the other German soldiers. Obviously tensions ran high between the patriotic internees who would rather be out fighting for Germany and the ones who had deserted. A committee was set up by the citizens of Alkmaar to get a separate camp for the "deserters". The press picked up the story and soon Bosboom was forced to defend his order in parliament. He would not budge, however, until in 1916 the German government supplied a list of deserters for whom they would not pay interning costs after the war. These men were now set free, but when many by their conduct proved a nuisance and danger to the general public they were picked up again and interned in a special camp.

Interned officers also caused major complications. The German, British and Belgian officers were all set free after they gave their word of honour and signed a written statement that they would not leave the Netherlands. When two German officers did return to Germany, they were returned by their government after the Dutch had protested, but the German
authorities also stated that German officers were not allowed
to sign such a document. Consequently, they all took their
word back and were interned in a camp in Bergen. A few weeks
later the British admiralty notified the Dutch government
that British officers could not give their word of honour
either. Before all British officers could be interned again,
a number had escaped. Three weeks later the British government
changed its mind: the officers could give their word of
honour. But now the Dutch would not set them free until the
escaped officers were returned to the Netherlands. This was
finally promised by the British in December 1915. In April
1916 the Belgian government announced its officers could
give their word of honour and the German government followed
a year later. 59

Escape attempts occurred quite frequently from the
Belgian camps. Especially at first when the camps were not
properly constructed or adequately guarded, and Belgian
refugees roamed all over the country, it was very difficult
to keep everything well organized. Refugees would stream to
the camps to find relatives or information about soldiers
they had lost contact with. During these visits a great deal
of food and alcohol was smuggled into the camps and unrest
remained at a very high level. Facilities for private visits
from wives or girlfriends were usually non-existent and added
to the complaints. On a number of occasions such major
disturbances took place that the Dutch guards fired into the
camps, e.g. at Zeist and Soesterberg. 60 The most serious
case was at Nunspeet where an attempted breakout cost the Belgians 8 dead and 18 wounded. 61

On investigation it soon became known that escapees often received help from the people living near the camps, in food, clothing as well as money. In order to curb this, all the areas and towns in the vicinity of camps were placed in \textit{staat van beleg} in early 1915. By the summer of that year the situation was improved; special guard detachments had been organized and the overall organization entrusted to a specially created department in Army Headquarters. Sport and recreation facilities were increased and when in 1916 arrangements were made for those who wanted to go out and work in industry or agriculture, most of the problems were ended. 62 It became possible for men to go on leave to England if there were serious problems or sickness in their immediate family. Many families also came to the Netherlands to visit the men in their camps.

In addition to guarding the interning camps, helping refugees and preventing smuggling the army began to encounter a few other problems such as prejudiced reporting by Dutch newspapers, espionage, foreign war correspondents who used the Netherlands as a gathering place for information, and foreign consulates which operated as recruiting offices for foreign armies. The latter did not really begin until 1915, but the first started the day Germany invaded Belgium.

On July 30, Minister Bosboom had sent a note to all newspapers in the country instructing them not to publish
anything about increases in the armed forces, strength of
the various units, conditions of forts and strong points,
the location of stores, etc., and also to keep a "neutral"
attitude when reporting all domestic and foreign news.63
Less than one month later the Commander in Chief wrote the
cabinet and urged it to introduce censorship on all news-
papers because the warning issued to them was not heeded
and an impartial attitude was nowhere to be found.64 By this
time Headquarters had been flooded with articles cut out of
newspapers by irate officers and civilians who thought them
pro-British, pro-German, anti-French, etc.65 The rather
ridiculous extent to which "matters of neutrality" could be
taken did little more than provide a massive amount of
paper work for the army without settling anything. The
government refused to censure newspapers and all the army
could do was prevent newspapers from publishing for a certain
time provided they were printed in an area that was in staat
van beleg.66 This was done, occasionally even by division
commanders, but the big dailies, printed in Rotterdam and
Amsterdam could not be touched. When the commander of the
field army brought an editor to court, the judge pointed out
that in cases of espionage, or biased reporting, a man could
only be punished under the existing civil law if it was
proved that the action had endangered the neutrality of the
country. And this was very difficult to prove. The only
other avenue open to the army was to remove the man from
the area in staat van beleg and forbid his reentry.67
Martial law did give the army a great deal more power, but it was not absolute. They could remove a man from the area in *staat van beleg* without officially charging him, but they could not jail him, or fine him, without going through the civil law process. This proved a great handicap when the fight against the smugglers was intensified in 1915.

The case of the foreign correspondents proved equally elusive. Obviously these men found the Netherlands a haven for information, especially places as Maastricht, very close to the German and Belgian borders with many Dutchmen going across to work each day and people coming from the other side to shop in that city. Flushing was also a very good place for information because there were many Belgian refugees in the town waiting for the ferry to take them to England. Some of these people had only just escaped out of Belgium and could tell a great deal for very little money.

On August 20, General Snijders had instructed all his subordinates that foreign correspondents were to be removed from the areas in *staat van beleg*, but this was easier said than done. In October, for instance, correspondents from the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *The Times* were found in Flushing. The army tried to keep these men out, but they kept slipping back into the prohibited areas. In April 1915, for example, a Paris journal published an account of the Dutch defences against a German invasion into the province of Zeeland. So explicit was the information that all artillery emplacements and mined bridges...
were accurately indicated. The army did not really stop the newspaper men until it had lists compiled of who they were and had their descriptions circulated around the areas in staat van beleg.

During the first few months neither Britain nor Germany seems to have had a very efficient espionage system in the Netherlands. Much of the information obtained went via the various consulates to the home country, and the Dutch could listen in on most telephone conversations to and from the consulates. By September the Dutch army knew that Dr. Gneist, the German Consul in Rotterdam was a very active spy for Germany, that he received information from a Dr. Brandt, Mr. Dirkzwager, Mr. H. van der Schriek, and Mr. P. W. Schliesser, director N. V. Vereenigde Drogisten. But as long as none of the information concerned the Netherlands, the Dutch military did not deem it necessary to take action. Similarly, the British also worked through their consulate, although they soon set up the bogus Uranium Steamship Company as a front for their espionage activities. The British were most interested in information about Belgium and tried to get much of the information from Belgian refugees. It seemed very much a case of the two espionage groups fighting each other, so the Dutch did nothing but observe. Before long, however, Dutch trade practices would be so well known to the two belligerents that it became extremely difficult for the Netherlands to do anything for one side without the other demanding an equal, or better deal.
For Army Headquarters one of the biggest difficulties was that all these new responsibilities needed men, and that these were in short supply. The interning camps had to be guarded, smugglers had to be caught, newspapermen had to be checked, telephones had to be listened in to, spies had to be shadowed, etc., and although in certain cases the municipal police forces could be employed, the army still had to use its own men. And this went at the expense of the numbers available for the field and the fortresses. The Stelling Amsterdam for example, with a front line almost 100 kilometers long, with 36 forts and strong points, was only manned by 5 landweer battalions. In October 1914, there was still no definite indication that the war of movement had come to an end for four years. The army officers still had to count on the possibility that the Germans be driven back so that fighting along the southern border of the Netherlands would start again in the spring. All the paperwork involved in reports and circulars only aggravated the already bad tendency in the army toward bureaucracy. More and more officers and men ended up behind desks instead of in the field, and this angered those who had to remain out on active duty and could not manage to find a "soft job" inside an office somewhere.

The positive side of all the extra work was that the army was busy, felt useful, gained a certain measure of pride in itself and was held in higher esteem by the Dutch people. The flood of Belgian refugees affected almost every
Dutch person, and it brought home the realization that only their own army guarding the borders could prevent a similar fate befalling the Netherlands. For a few months the Dutch buried their differences, overcame their latent antimilitarism, and placed themselves as one people behind their leaders and their armed forces. The feeling of unity did not last long. Once the immediate danger of invasion receded the Dutch returned to their old divisions, local prejudices, and old antagonisms. The individual, or the small group, came first again and only serious and immediate national emergencies could bring a change in that. Most Dutch people did not consider a trench war in northern France a Dutch national emergency. At best it was interesting to read about in the newspapers. Little support was therefore given in the next few years to the people and organizations working to strengthen the defensive capabilities of the Netherlands.

5. Problems Within the Army

During the first few months the troubles within the army were not yet large. The danger was still too great, there was too much to do and the situation was too unusual for serious issues to arise. Boredom, the great enemy of the coming years, had not yet set in. But there were already a number of incipient problems which in the coming years would gnaw away the little vitality the army possessed.
One of the first things the Dutch soldier began to grumble about was the inadequacy of the leaves. Mobilization meant that division and territorial commanders could not grant leaves, so everything had to be regulated by Army Headquarters. On August 19, General Snijders had issued an order that fortress troops could get a 24 hour pass once every 7 days and the remainder of the army every 10 days. For anyone who could not get home the same evening that his leave began, a 48 hour pass every 14 (or 20) days would be issued. 74 From the Commander in Chief's point of view it was all quite reasonable; it meant that 10-14 per cent of the army (about 20-23,000 men) would not be available for duty on any given day and that was already a very large number. Many soldiers, however, felt slighted in the different treatment between fortress troops and others (later the leave periods were made the same); almost everyone thought that a 10 day period away from home was intolerable. The married men thought it unfair that the unmarried ones got as much leave as they did; those far from home looked askance at those stationed in their home town and able to sneak home for an hour or so at night.

Another reason for complaint was that some men quite soon managed to get away on an "indefinite" leave which in fact got them out of the army until a second mobilization was called. General Snijders had not wanted to issue any indefinite leaves but Bosboom had overruled him. Some people were simply indispensable in civilian life and should not
be buried in the army where their talents would go to waste. Once the decision was made, however, all sorts of people thought themselves indispensable. Bosboom was continually put under pressure by fellow parliamentarians who had a "special case", by mayors who wrote long letters, by industrialists who really needed various men now serving in the army, etc. Army Headquarters was also buried under requests, and each had to be studied individually and judged on its own merits. Of the 3,452 requests General Snijders had received by December, he granted 1,235 men indefinite leave. Bosboom granted an even larger number. Later another category, "special leaves" would complicate matters even more and would cause endless complaints from soldiers (not enough leaves) and from Army Headquarters (too many leaves).

Closely connected with the complaints about leaves were those about pay. There were no less than 87 different pay categories (below the rank of officer) depending on rank, age, seniority, service time, branch of service, etc. Actual pay varied from 2,25 guilders a day for senior warrant officers to 10 cents a day for a recently drafted recruit. In addition, there were special mobilization costs for the individual such as loss of wages, loss of production, travel costs, cost of living bonus, etc., which had to be repaid by the Crown. Obviously there was a great deal of confusion among the lower ranks as to what they should get paid, and a great deal of bitterness when some of the inadequacies of the system came to light. A draftee who had been
a baker's helper in civilian life and was placed in a military bakery was given 30 cents a day extra because "he knew his job", but the farmer's son digging trenches only received his 10 cents a day. He who had volunteered for the army received 15 cents a day, but his cost of living allowance was 10 cents a day while that of the draftee was 13 cents, thus giving the former 2 cents a day more. Some of the municipalities continued to pay 60-80 per cent of the wages to their clerks while they were in the army, but others who had had a less generous employer did not get anything. And so the soldier only had to look around him to find reasons to complain and dislike the army a little more each day.

By law, the Crown had to ensure that no family was wanting when the breadwinner was called into the service. For this reason it was possible to give a maximum of one guilder a day to a family of a militia man, one and a half guilders to a family of a landweer man, and two guilders to a landstorm man family (later, when prices increased sharply, these amounts were raised). There was no logical reason why the amounts paid to families should have a different maximum except that a man serving in the militia would be much younger than one serving in the landstorm, but this was no criterion because family needs did not always vary with the age of the breadwinner. This extra money was given to the family in addition to the man's army pay, but it could not exceed the regular income the family had had before the man was called to active duty. It was another sign of the low
esteem the military was held in—no one was to be better off in the army than out of it. To complicate things further, this extra money for the family was first paid out of the local municipal funds (who then claimed it from the Department of War), and the mayor had to decide which family needed extra money and how much was needed. There were three variables in this arrangement: one mayor would be more generous than another, the cost of living between country and city was different, some men saved part of their army pay and sent it home while others did not; but these were not taken into consideration by the government and caused endless complaining by the soldiers. Many lived in fear that their families would not have enough to eat.\textsuperscript{81}

The question of free train travel for soldiers was also made a needless source of irritation. The Minister of War had decided that a man could only receive a free-travel pass if he really needed it. The commanding officers of the units were to decide whether the head of a family was in genuine need of free travel. If the man was single it should also be investigated if he really needed to go home on his pass. If this proved essential, and he had no money, he could get a free pass.\textsuperscript{82}

The pettiness of many of these regulations really irked the soldiers. It did nothing to lift the morale of the men, but rather resulted in efforts to forge passes, go home without official leave, attempt to get extra leave by inventing stories, and generally hastened the process of
demoralization. Many would be more inclined to earn a few guilders through aiding a smuggler than if the army had treated them in a better manner. The efforts to remedy the deterioration of morale and spirit which now began came too late and were often on much too small a scale to be effective. Four and a half years of waiting in idleness is difficult enough in itself without the added burden of petty rules and regulations.

The various sources of irritation for the men, the tendency of many officers to look for "safe" office jobs, the bungling by the government in stipulating leave periods not the same for all men were all part of the lack of a military tradition within the Netherlands, the indifference with which many viewed the armed forces, and the unfamiliarity of the new situation. When all the heated discussions were taking place in the previous decade about the need for better defence forces, no one had really stopped to think what it would mean for the Netherlands if it had a mobilized army of 200,000 men and had to maintain such a force for a certain length of time. The military leaders had worked out plans for a mobilization, had thought about the best defensive positions and had prepared them as well as possible with the little money given them. But they had not considered the possibility that the army would be forced to stand in idleness for many months, even though the policies of all Dutch governments had always been directed at keeping the country out of all wars. The government, on the other hand
had never considered the effect of neutrality in the context of the Dutch armed forces. It had agreed to a mobilization plan, but had never asked the army officers how they planned to keep such a large army fit and ready while it was doomed to wait for events to happen. Virtually all levels of Dutch society had adopted the same idea: wait passively for things to happen, then take the minimum preventive steps necessary, and then wait again. Now that a war was raging just outside the Dutch borders, and the Dutch army was called out, the lack of preparations caused numerous complaints and dissatisfaction among the people serving in that army. And because no one was willing to take adequate and far-reaching measures to alleviate the problems they remained and got worse.

These first few months of the war were a vital test for the Netherlands; it was the time that the army leaders had to find ways and means to increase the morale and bring the forces in proper fettle for any emergency that might occur; the government had to convince the nation at large of the precarious position the country was in, and that therefore everyone should do what he could to help; the people as a whole had to adapt to the new situation, realize the vulnerability of their little nation, put aside old habits, differences with each other, anti-militaristic tendencies, and indifferences toward all things not concerning them directly.

How important national unity of purpose in time of war is has been shown in the last few years in the United States
of America. The Netherlands was not actually at war, but no one could predict when this would change. If it did come, the national effort would have to be much greater than the United States has to put forth in Vietnam; for the Dutch it would become a matter of life and death. There was as yet a short time to prepare, but no one took advantage of it. The four years that followed were therefore all the more difficult and because no one ever tried to change the existing apathy, provincialism, and myopia, the Dutch nation was caught in a similar position in the autumn of 1939. Nothing was done then either; it did not seem necessary because it had not proved necessary in 1914. The price had to be paid from 1940 to 1945. Only after five years of enemy occupation did the Dutch learn that it is sometimes necessary to spend money and effort preparing for something that may not happen, but can happen. The lesson learned from 1940 to 1945 could have been learned during the Great War.
CHAPTER III
Smuggling, Censorship and Counter-espionage

1. Smuggling

Shortly after the outbreak of war the Dutch army was told to stop the smuggling along the Dutch borders; sixteen months later the responsibility was given to the Department of Finance because the army had failed. The case of the elusive smugglers tells something about the army, the government and the Dutch people in general. The army was not prepared for the job and had never anticipated that it would ever have to deal with such matters. The military leaders had prepared for a defensive war behind the inundations and forts of the Stelling Holland; they had never considered that the army might have to carry out other responsibilities. The politicians had not thought about it either; they had let the army officers plan their defences, and had simply continued the passive neutrality politics of their predecessors in office. With no previous thought given to the possible effects of a Netherlands surrounded by nations at war, the army and the politicians had no ideas on how to deal with the problem. The Dutch people, after the first few months, acted as if Europe was at peace with the only difference that there was now some money to be made in areas where before this had not been possible.

The smuggling problem is just one example how the Dutch continued to serve their private, or small group
interest in spite of the war which raged about them. There was no national drawing together to face the mounting problem of being a small neutral nation amidst a Europe at war, or to prepare for a possible invasion. Opinions and ideas hardly changed: the army was still viewed as an unavoidable evil (out of necessity now much larger) which one should try to outwit at the border inspection points rather than aid in its efforts to keep as many goods in the country as possible. Only when the scarcity of goods began to effect many people did they turn on the government for not stopping the smuggling but then it was still out of personal concern and not the national one. The politicians were also to blame; they continued to use peace time methods in time of war. Reluctant to give the army the power it needed, unwilling to introduce severe punishments for smuggling, they presented the problem to the people as if it was simply an increase in the illegal export of goods. No national campaign was mounted which showed smuggling as a weakening of the Dutch nation which could cause severe liabilities if the nation was put under strong military or economic pressures from either Germany or Great Britain. The army authorities did not present the case to the soldiers in this manner either. They continued to view smuggling control as an "extra" responsibility placed upon the army which was not part of the main function, defence of the Netherlands. Because the matter was viewed in this light, the problem was all the more difficult for the army and might well be the main reason it failed so badly.
The quantities that were smuggled were not large enough to create a famine in the Netherlands, but they did aggravate the scarcity; nor could smuggled goods ever sustain the German war effort, but they did help. Had the goods been legally exported to Germany, at least the Netherlands would have received valuable coal and iron in return. Apart from those reasons, the urgency to stop smuggling increased as various developments took place during the war. At first it had been a question of preventing the depletion of stockpiles in the Netherlands; once the N.O.T. was instituted it also became necessary to prohibit goods imported by the N.O.T. from leaving the country in whatever form. As the British and French governments improved their surveillance methods within the Netherlands more and more pressure was placed on the Dutch government to end the illegal export of goods. By 1917 the scarcity of many goods within the country made people all the more critical of a government which seemed incapable of keeping the much needed products at home. Certain newspapers kept printing articles about smuggling, and the fantastic stories that were circulated not only kept the problem in the news, but also made it seem worse than it was. Many people in the lower income groups became suspicious that those who did well in business must be smuggling and the derogatory term O.W.ers (derived from Oorlog Winst, War Profits) was used frequently. That a great many of the people who complained about the smuggling did so out of jealousy does not alter the fact that dissatisfaction and civil unrest
was aggravated. In addition, the army came under criticism and fell into greater disrepute because it was unable to stop the smuggling.

Although the army could have been much more effective in smuggling prevention, it must be remembered that this was a new role for the army and there was no help forthcoming from the Germans or Belgians as had been the case in peace time. The Germans were not adverse to having goods come into their country—by whatever method. In Belgium the Germans' main concern was that the smuggled goods should come into their hands and not into those of the Belgian population. General von Zwehl, the German Governor of Antwerp, explained after the war that he could not have prevented smuggling even had he wanted to. German border guards often had to remain in one position for over a year which made them very vulnerable to bribes and influences from the indigenous population. Later the border guards were convalescing wounded, men 45 or older, or soldiers who had been too severely wounded to return to active front line duty. Still later landstorm battalions from the Russian front were sent to Belgium. The latter were virtually without discipline, and could not care less about smugglers; in fact, they actively participated themselves. If the Dutch wanted to prevent smuggling, they had to do it by themselves.

Those who tried to prevent the smuggling had to contend with many difficulties. The border was 950 km. long; often it ran through little towns and villages and even if that
was not the case, people on both sides spoke the same dialect, had the same customs and habits, and knew each other well. Furthermore, the list of goods prohibited for export was long, frequently items were added and sometimes subtracted. By 1917 there were more than 1,000 items on the list. Lastly, not all smugglers operated the same, and different methods for catching them had to be used. There were people living near the border who had small quantities of goods on their person to take across when visiting, or when going to work in Belgium or Germany. Many also made nocturnal voyages loaded with as much as they could carry. The professional smuggler stockpiled his goods until he had a substantial quantity, hired 20 to 40 men who, for a nice reward, carried the goods over the border at night at some lonely place. Then there were the businessmen who tried to falsify papers, "buy" export licences from the "right" officials, or hide tons of illegal goods in ships or in freight cars underneath legally exported articles. Officially, the first two types of smuggling were categorized as **consumptie-smokkel** (consumer goods smuggling), the latter as **fraude** (fraud).

At first all attention was focussed on catching people crossing the border with prohibited wares. Border posts were increased, numerous patrols walked up and down between fixed points, and special ambushes were set up at night to catch the bigger gangs. Much of this was ineffective, however. The gangs were difficult to detect at night, especially in
wooded areas. Too many soldiers were stationed in their own area and they were not willing to apprehend smugglers who were good acquaintances, friends or relatives. Many soldiers passively or actively aided the smugglers. Cries of frustration by local commanders soon caused individuals, companies, or even battalions to be posted to other locations, away from their own area.  

As already explained, the existing laws were of little help to the military. A smuggler who was caught had to be tried in a civilian court and this cost time and involved a great deal of paper work. Removing a person out of the area in staat van beleg was a deterrent for those who had possessions or work there, but meant nothing to those who came from elsewhere. When by November, 1914, the whole eastern and southern border was declared to be in staat van beleg, it was an area one hour's walk wide (een uur gaans)—roughly 5-6 km. Within this area the military authorities issued a number of orders during 1915 designed to stop the consumptie-smokkel, e.g. food, small luxury items, livestock, etc. It was forbidden for private persons to have more food in their homes than necessary, and stores could have no larger reserves than they normally had. Stockpiling of any sort was forbidden. All goods within the staat van beleg area moving in the direction of the border had to have a special permit from the authorities. Livestock was registered by type and colour and could not be grazed in areas close to the border.
The measures were intended to prevent stockpiling close to the border from where the goods could be easily transported across. The army had some success, but the smugglers were usually one step ahead of the authorities. Unable to collect their goods in the *staat van beleg* area, they simply stockpiled them outside the area, walked a little further at night, ran a slightly greater risk of getting caught, and continued to smuggle.

The ingenuity and audacity of the smugglers was tremendous. Horses conveniently broke loose or "got lost" and ended up across the border. Train engineers hid articles under and in their locomotives and the coal cars. Cattle were towed across the river behind a row boat. Logs were hollowed out and filled with fat. Eggs (which could then be exported) were carried across and on examination proved to be of rubber whitened with lime. Bicycle tires were filled with chocolate bars. Farmers who went to Germany to help with the harvest left with young, healthy horses and returned with skinny old nags of approximately the same colour. Fat ladies proved to be skinny ones with special corsets filled with all sorts of goods. Drums with (legal export) lemonade syrup had double walls filled with (illegal) oil or fat. The number of tricks makes an endless list.  

Those who were fortunate enough to have property right along the border could really do well. One Mr. Soeren whose garden bordered on Germany, built a shed with one door opening on Dutch, the other door on German soil. Many things
were carried into the Dutch door, but nothing ever came back out. When the army clamped down, it also discovered that a pipe had been constructed inside the house which ran underneath the garden into Germany. Reportedly it greatly facilitated the smuggling of gasoline and coal oil. Another easy method was used near Maastricht where the Meuse River runs from Dutch into Belgian territory before returning for good to Dutch soil. Drums were dumped into the river in the Netherlands and were fished out again in Belgium. At first the army did not have a fast boat and could only watch the drums drift past. Eventually a boat was procured which put an end to it.

A fairly effective solution was also found for the military ambushes at night. A few men, empty handed, walked ahead of the gang carrying the smuggle ware. The patrol, unable to see very much in the dark, challenged when it heard a few men walking. The "innocent" men stood and waited to be searched, while their comrades safely made off with the goods still in their possession. The next night they would try again, and perhaps have more luck.

The number of soldiers involved in smuggling must have been large, but the number caught was small. The men rarely wanted to testify against a comrade, and because the nature of the involvement was often passive—looking the other way or not being at a certain post at a given time—detection was difficult and proving involvement even more so. If they participated actively it was often with expensive, small in
volume, wares such as spices. These could be bought at home when on leave without arousing suspicion and sold to the German border guards. Official efforts to introduce a reward system were not very successful. A soldier could get up to 5 guilders (paid by the Department of Finance) if he was proficient in catching smugglers or locating smugglers' caches. Usually the reward was only about 1 or 2 guilders and this was hardly an enticement. There was so much money to be made by helping smugglers that men whose turn it was to go on watch were sometimes offered 10 guilders or more by others to take the watch for them. A better idea was to give the men extra leave as a reward. The territorial commander of Limburg wrote General Snijders that he had been very successful with this. The difficulty here was that not too many men could be sent on extra leave since too few would remain to do the necessary work.

In spite of the shortcomings of the army, some goods were intercepted, smugglers were caught, and charges were laid. From January 1 to November 15, 1915 the following were intercepted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity/Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows (various kinds)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liter oil</td>
<td>336,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liter coal oil</td>
<td>151,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liter gasoline</td>
<td>2,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liter oil</td>
<td>1,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>3,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>10,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>25,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margarine</td>
<td>139,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>101,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain</td>
<td>264,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. flour)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A great number of other products or materials (69 items in all) in lesser quantities were also confiscated. What the military did not catch can only be imagined. But in 1917,
when control had been tightened and was much more efficient, General Snijders, N.O.T. officials, and other authorities admitted that the intercepted goods of that year were probably only 10 per cent of the total that was being smuggled. The goods intercepted during 1915 can probably be estimated to be between 1 per cent and 5 per cent of the total amounts that crossed the border illegally.

In order to intercept those goods, the army had employed 23,445 military personnel in the "first line"—i.e. on watches and patrols in the area in *staat van beleg*. During 1915, 127 military were caught cooperating in some way with smugglers; 62 smugglers were wounded or killed by the military; 1,297 people were removed from the area in *staat van beleg*; 36,679 charges were laid of which 803 were dropped for various reasons and 768 persons were declared not guilty by the courts.

That such a large number of soldiers had to be used against the smugglers was of great concern to Army Headquarters. The special and regular leaves already removed many from the ranks, and with roughly 11 per cent of the army fighting smugglers, between one-quarter and one-third of the mobilized strength of the army was unavailable for daily training or organized defence against a possible attack.

Since the army was not very effective against the smugglers anyway, a law was passed on December 31, 1915 which returned the responsibility for border control in so
far as the passage of goods was concerned to the Department of Finance. This was to take effect April 1, 1916. There still were not enough regular customs officers and especially trustworthy soldiers were chosen to augment the ranks. Eventually 6,000 men were drawn from the army. They performed their new function in uniform, received 50 cents a day extra from the Department of Finance, and were expected to be incorruptible. The area in *staat van beleg* was almost doubled in width, and the laws against transporting and stockpiling goods within the area were toughened. All goods moving from the center of the country to the peripheries needed a "domestic passport", a transfer permit, or an export licence. On the documents the make, type, receiver, transporter, date of departure and expected arrival as well as the route was given. It was hoped that these measures would end the practice of smuggling. General Snijders was extremely happy to be rid of the responsibility although he bemoaned the loss of 6,000 of his better men. The border guards were still expected to arrest smugglers if they ran into them, and the customs officials could request the cooperation of the army if a large operation was planned.

Considering the quantities of goods that were intercepted, it would appear that the new system was an improvement over the old. During the first four months of 1917, the following was confiscated:
6,190 kg. grease  
3,362 kg. cheese  
7,927 kg. peas and beans  
4,636 kg. tea  
26,124 kg. coffee  
18,802 kg. pepper  
19,733 kg. cocoa and chocolate  
56,040 kg. grain and flour  
29,422 kg. rice and groats (a barley product)  
117,596 kg. soap and 62,131 bars of soap

In addition, lesser amounts of a large number of other goods such as leather, rubber, eggs, etc., were intercepted.

These quantities may not seem very large, but they only represent the goods intercepted during a four month period, and if they are only 10 per cent of the total amounts smuggled as estimated by the various authorities the totals for the year 1917 become rather more significant. It meant, for instance, that 1,724,184 one-pound bags of coffee left the Netherlands which the Dutch people were not able to buy themselves and which, because of the unrestricted submarine warfare, were now almost impossible to replace from overseas countries. During 1917 only 15 million kg. coffee was imported (versus 145 million kg. in 1913), and this dropped to 3 million kg. in 1918.

The 1917 smuggled quantities show that the scarcity of goods within the Netherlands did not restrain the Dutch from smuggling; the shortages in Germany were even greater and large profits could be made. There was now a strong social stigma attached to war profiteering and people looked askance at the O.W.ers, but this had little effect. In one year 350 Dutchmen became millionairs according to their tax returns.
How many others did as well without the Department of Finance knowing about it will never be uncovered, but there were probably a great many. Of course not everyone who made money was an **O.W.er**; there were people who stayed within the law and simply took advantage of the new situation in Europe to earn a higher income.

On the other hand, buying and selling illegally now that many articles were rationed was practised by almost all Dutch people and no one thought it really wrong.\(^1\) The **O.W.ers** were disliked and even detested, but many who harboured these feelings would have become war profiteers if given the chance. Envy, suspicion and mistrust reigned supreme within the nation; everyone was suspected of buying or selling illegally, or hoarding food, or of smuggling.

The Dutch government could not be blamed for the scarcity of goods within the Netherlands, but it certainly could have acted sooner and more strictly against the war profiteers and smugglers. In the last three years of the war the government spent 9 million guilders on smuggling prevention;\(^2\) this was hardly a large sum considering the government gave out 1.5 billion guilders as "crisis expenditure"\(^3\) during the four years of the war. Stiff punishments for smuggling were introduced much too late. Not until March, 1917 was a law passed which made it possible to place suspected smugglers in jail while waiting for their trial date. It made for tremendous overcrowding, new jails had to be built, and did reduce smuggling although it did not end it.\(^4\)
Smuggling by civilians might have been curtailed somewhat in 1917; smuggling by soldiers increased sharply. This happened partly because the worsening economic conditions within the country and the rising prices increased the desire for more money, partly because boredom was all prevailing and smuggling was excitement, but largely because many men in uniform seemed to have felt that there was now nothing to hold them back because the army was not responsible for stopping the illegal trade anymore. Apparently many men had taken their role seriously in 1915 and early 1916; they had tried to catch smugglers and had not considered doing themselves what they had to prevent others from doing. But now that the army had no responsibility anymore, they thought it all right to start smuggling. It became a matter of outsmarting the customs officials. The typical Dutch mentality of seeing one's own group pitted against another group or groups and trying to get the best of the situation was also present in the army; in this case it became the soldier versus the customs officer.

The military commanders tried to curb the smuggling soldiers but had little success. On February 9, 1917, the Commander Field Army instructed the territorial commanders to place as many border areas as possible out of bounds for military personnel. Only with written permission from the company commanders were men allowed in such areas. Those who were on guard duty near the border would be checked at irregular times while at their posts for possession of illegal
goods. The military police and customs officers would carry out these checks; regular troops were not reliable enough. A few days later the commander of the First Division asked permission to set up a fund out of which to pay "cheaters" in order to get more information about the soldiers who smuggled and where they hid their goods.

Nothing appears to have been successful. In September the territorial commanders were once again urged to rotate men, companies and battalions as frequently as possible, and to charge, punish and post away every man caught smuggling. A few days later General Snijders reproached his officers and told them to hand out stiffer sentences and to maintain stricter control because the smuggling by military was not diminishing at all.

Some of the soldiers were quite audacious. They would go out near the border, intercept a smuggler, present themselves as a special customs officer, confiscate the goods, appear "lenient" and let the man go free, and proceed to sell the confiscated goods themselves. Others would agree to act as "forerunners" for a band of smugglers, cry "customs ambush"; the band would drop its wares and run off, and the "forerunners" and men of the "ambush" would collect the wares and sell them.

The (often exaggerated) stories told by the soldiers about their exploits only brought more criticism against the government. The natural tendency of the Dutch to complain found a wide open field now that things were becoming very
difficult. More serious was the fact that foreign ambassadors also exerted pressure on the Dutch government to curb this excessive smuggling. Foreign Minister Louden had first received complaints from the ambassadors in the summer of 1915, but the trickle had become a stream when the Amsterdam newspaper, the Telegraaf, had organized its "anti-smuggling bureau" in the autumn of that year.

The Telegraaf was the enfant terrible of the Dutch press. Widely read (3 editions a day), it brought the news in a sensational manner and tried to make an issue out of as many things as possible. Whereas the principal daily Dutch newspapers strove to maintain a punctilious neutrality in their comments on the war, thus abiding by the government's request for strict neutrality in reporting, the Telegraaf from the beginning adhered to a strong pro-British attitude. Neutrality as recommended by the government was to the Telegraaf a betrayal of Dutch interest; it meant friendly intercourse with Germany and acceptance (if not approval) of the invasion of Belgium. The paper was vehement in its editorial comment, wholesale in its condemnation of everything German, and constant in its faultfinding of the policies of the Dutch government.

The "anti-smuggling bureau" set up by the Telegraaf had Dutchmen and foreigners in its service and kept a close watch on all goods going across the frontier. When clandestine trade was discovered, the information was either printed or forwarded to the French and British embassies. Augmented with their own information the embassies then launched pro-
tests against the Dutch government. Considering the source of the information, Louden did not appreciate the protests, especially when the British Ambassador, Johnstone, began to send lists of names, occupations, and addresses of suspected smugglers. In August, 1916, Johnstone charged that at Eelde gangs of smugglers crossed the border unhindered. The Dutch sentries had become blind and dumb on the approach of the gang. In September the charge was laid that two Dutch soldiers had been caught, one with 90 kg. margarine, the other with 100 kg. Why did the Dutch government not do something about this? In October Johnstone sent six pages of names, aliases used, occupations, and addresses of smugglers and probable suppliers and suspicious persons. In an accompanying letter the ambassador explained: "I bring this to your Excellency's knowledge in the hope of assisting the Netherlands authorities to prevent breaches of Netherland law." In the margin opposite this Louden's angry scrawl reads "Zeer Vriendelijk!!!" (very friendly!!!), and above the letter, "Is de Telegraaf weer in actie?" (Is the Telegraaf in action again?)

Such reports by themselves did little harm, but the pressure that could be exerted from London in so far as Dutch trade and imports were concerned was considerable. For Army Headquarters the extensive smuggling practices of the military should have been an indication that the rot within the army was growing. This must have been especially obvious from the many reports of the military police that officers
were not above smuggling either. In one case, four Dutch officers managed to sell 500 kg. cigarettes to the Germans in one month. Some of the commanders of out of the way border posts managed to do exceptionally well. That many men were not sufficiently deterred from smuggling by the normal punishments—loss of leave, extra drill, postings inland, or the stockade—should also have been a source of concern for the General Staff. Men who after repeated punishment still proved incorrigible were posted to a special unit at Fort Crevercoeur—far from the border and under close supervision. But not everyone could be posted there; the army was simply too small and could not afford the loss of too many men even if they were not reliable.

Smuggling need not have been a major problem at all if strong laws had been passed, and if the army had been given a free hand and told to clamp down. Even if that had not been done, the problem could have been less important if knowledge of the extent of smuggling had been confined locally to the Netherlands. But the government was equally lax in censuring newspapers and clearing the nation of spies. The information that the warring nations gained as a result inevitably led to greater pressures on the Netherlands.
2. Censorship and Counter-espionage

One would expect that the army, being responsible for internal security, would have various methods of gathering information about possibly dangerous persons within the country. This was not the case, however. The information gathering service of the army was rather amateurish. The General Staff did not have an Intelligence Branch until June 25, 1914. It did not begin to work efficiently until 1917 and during the war did not grow larger than 12 officers and a like number of other ranks. Designated G.S. III, it was confined to counter-espionage. It received almost all its information from the somewhat later instituted G.S. IV (censorship, listening in on telephone conversations), from the military attachés created in 1916, and from various detective branches of the larger municipal police forces. Not until May 1919 were G.S. III and G.S. IV combined and was the scope of the Branch broadened. There was thus no central agency which collected information about radicals, anarchists, or other extreme elements who could endanger internal security. The General Staff assumed that local police forces would keep an eye on the activities of such persons and organizations. 38

G.S. IV was at first primarily concerned with providing information for G.S. III. In January 1915 the decision was made to censor letters, telegrams and telephone conversations in order to gain more information about illegal trade practices and smuggling. Even then the measures were half-hearted.
Royalty, Members of Parliament, highly placed civil servants, officers and their families, and foreign ambassadors were exempted from censorship. Mail within the Netherlands was only opened if it was addressed to a person living in the staat van beleg areas or came from there, and even then only spot checks were made. All letters going abroad (except from the exempted persons) were checked, but not if they were going to a neutral country. Only persons suspected of smuggling had all their mail opened.39

That a great deal of information slipped past the censors speaks for itself. Everyone always knew when his mail had been opened because it would be stamped "Geopend door de militaire authoriteiten" (opened by the military authorities).40 Those who thought, or knew, themselves to be under suspicion would find other means to communicate. Irritated people soon began to complain to Members of Parliament about having their mail opened, about censorship slowing down the mail, or of not receiving their mail (for which the censor was always blamed). Questions in Parliament resulted in a new regulation that mail could only be opened "with cause". This brought an even larger number of complaints in the autumn of 1916. Companies and private persons now objected because they were not guilty of anything and their mail was still opened, or that the reason they were once under suspicion was long a thing of the past and there was no need to check them now, etc.41

The inefficient censorship still provided enough
information to show that a great many illegal practices took place. Export licences could be "bought" from the "right" official, articles being exported were marked "trans-shipment", efforts were made to get certain items off the prohibited export list, guarded language, and private codes were used to fool the censors. Even if the authorities did obtain proof of illegal practices it was often too late—the shipment was already over the border, or had just been sold, etc. 

A few good catches were made such as Dr. Brandt who had managed to bring together 700 tons of copper from various ship-wrecking yards. The obvious intention was to smuggle it into Germany in some manner or other. In order to prevent a recurrence of this sort of thing the areas where the yards were located (along the major rivers) were put in staat van beleg. In time the army managed to collect a 48 page (typed, single space) list of suspicious persons whose mail should be checked and telephone conversations overheard. To this must be added the 16 page list of names supplied by the N.O.T.—which had its own inspectors primarily concerned with following the goods imported under N.O.T. consignments. 

There were thus enough suspected persons, and many charges were laid. But because it sometimes took months before a case could be handled by the overloaded courts, and because a maximum jail penalty of 3 months, or 100 guilders fine could be given to smugglers, the deterrence was not very great.

Many officers disapproved of the way the censorship
was handled. A report prepared by Headquarters Field Army in February 1918 declared that the censorship was ineffective because: the "black list" check was no good; those on it would use other means of communication; the "travelling censor" who periodically visited small post offices to carry out spot checks was insufficient. The report recommended that all letters should be checked, and that a means should be available to open certain letters without it being visible afterwards. Too much slipped past the (too few) censors and the whole system ought to be reorganized.48

Checking telephone conversations was easier than censoring letters because there were relatively few telephones yet and the lines to foreign countries ran through a small number of exchanges. It was therefore soon known to the Dutch that a large number of "part-time" spies were active in the Netherlands. They were frequently Belgians working for the French, British, or their own government. The Germans preferred to employ men of their own nationality. If such a suspicious person was ordered out of the area in staat van beleg, often a formal complaint from the respective ambassador would follow. The army was then charged with interfering in a man's legal business travels. Since proof of spying was seldom available the person was usually allowed back in to keep international friction to a minimum.49

Such a conciliatory policy only hurt the Netherlands in general and the government in particular. The spies might have been employed to ferret out information about either
Germany or Great Britain, but they tended to find out little bits of information about Dutch trade practices and the extent of the smuggling. The respective employers of the spies would piece all the bits of information together and achieve an extensive knowledge of the Dutch economy. Especially the United Kingdom was quick to use this knowledge to put pressure on the Dutch government and to threaten ever greater economic sanctions if things were not changed. England was very quick to castigate the Dutch for their "illegal" actions, but was not above practising some of them herself if they benefitted her. Smuggling goods across the North Sea was out of the question because of the distance and the danger of mines, but bringing men illegally from the continent to the British Isles was attempted quite frequently.

The Dutch army knew that the British and Belgian governments tried to recruit young men for their armies. These men were contacted in Belgium and travelled via the Netherlands to Great Britain. As long as such a person said he was on his own, had a pass from his consul in the Netherlands, he could not be stopped. The consuls were clever enough to make the passes out for "travel purposes", or "seeking factory employment", so they could not be accused of recruiting on foreign soil.50 Only when civilian recruiting bureaus sent a number of men in organized and supervised groups through the Netherlands to Great Britain could the Dutch army act. And this could seldom be proven.

The Germans also knew that Belgian youths were leaving
their country to join the armies of the "other side". In order to prevent this, a high-tension electric fence was constructed along the Dutch-Belgian frontier. It did stop people not familiar with the border areas from crossing into the Netherlands, but usually someone could be found who knew a way of getting through. It did not stop the smugglers, who used long cutters with insulated handles to cut the wire. Before a patrol had found the break the smugglers had long departed. Others used hollow wooden boxes or barrels to crawl under the lethal wire. Young lads from the border villages would crawl under the wire and back again if given a 5 cent piece.

The Dutch army did not prove itself very efficient in preventing smugglers from carrying out their trade, or in stopping Belgian youths from going to England to join the army. Counter-espionage was a little more successful, but in essence this was not very important for the Netherlands. The government and Army Headquarters were derided for their inability to stop illegal trade—as the O.W.ers were for practising it. To the individual soldier who smuggled no stigma was attached; he was felt to be in a bad situation so he might as well make the most of it and if he could earn a few extra guilders through smuggling, all well and good. Most people knew they would do the same thing if they were in his position. But the army as an institution suffered; the little esteem it had had in August 1914 was gone by 1918.
Inefficiency in preventing smuggling or applying censorship were only part of the overall major mistake the Netherlands made from 1914 to 1918. The Dutch continued to practise their pre-war passive neutrality and refused to recognize that the Netherlands should now adopt an aggressive and forceful attitude. Had the nation placed itself fully behind the armed forces, had smuggling been combated firmly, and censorship been applied to all publications, while at the same time the espionage efforts of the belligerents had been forbidden and those practiseing it sent out of the country, the Netherlands would have had a much easier time of it. If Great Britain and Germany had been forced to view the Netherlands as an enigma of which they knew little except that it was armed, determined, and willing to fight for its rights, much less pressure would have been exerted upon her. Such a policy would not have been easy and would have required a great effort on every Dutchman's part. The Dutch failed to change while all about them the old, 19th century Europe was falling apart. By remaining inert at this time they laid the foundation for their own defeat two decades later. When danger threatened Europe then, they would continue to look back to the Great War and point out that they had come through it unscathed without taking any extra measures to speak of; they would therefore come through this new peril also if they only practised passive neutrality.
CHAPTER IV
Problems Within the Army

1. National Sentiment

An army's efficiency and fighting capabilities are directly related to its training, weapons and morale. All three are indirectly related (at least in a nationally conscripted army) to the civilian population out of which the army is drawn and for whose protection it exists. It has already been related that the Dutch did not think it necessary to provide their army with up-to-date weapons, nor did they believe that any kind of harsh training methods should be employed. As soon as that happened the cry of "Prussian drill tactics" was heard which was the magic word to bring about a storm of protest. In the Dutch mind Germany was often equated with Prussia and the Dutch character found something repulsive in the arrogant and superior Prussian attitude. The love for uniforms, weapons and all things military so prevalent in Germany was a vexation for a large section of the Dutch people who preferred peace and trade to war. In addition certain Pan-Germans had hinted that the Netherlands should become part of the new Mittel Europa and this did not sit well with the Dutch either.

All this should not be taken to mean that the Dutch people were therefore very anti-German. The Dutch were all too well aware that half their national trade was with Germany and this was a very important point for many people.
Besides, the British were not exactly loved either because many remembered the Boer War when Dutch sentiment had been decidedly anti-British. Only certain staunchly Calvinistic groups, and a few orthodox Roman Catholics, felt a stronger antipathy against heathen France, "seat of revolution", than against Germany. Especially for the orthodox Protestants, (the Christian) Wilhelm II and the Evangelical Church were objects of admiration. Kuyper, leader of the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (and Premier from 1901 to 1905) even tried to excuse the German invasion of Belgium in the party organ De Standaard. "There can be", he wrote, "a situation where a government has to break written laws in order to maintain absolute justice."¹ The number of Dutchmen who thought this way was very small, however. For millions it was no question for debate who had started the war—Germany had invaded Belgium and that was the end of the discussion.

Because the Dutch did not have any strong feeling against either the British or the Germans, it was an arduous task to create and maintain a good morale in the army. After the first few months the population at large did not believe the Netherlands would be invaded any more, and they promptly returned to their indifferent attitude towards the Dutch army. Among the Dutch professional officer corps there were a great many who admired Germany for her military organization, the status accorded to the army, and the all-prevailing discipline.² These officers wanted the object of their professional admiration to defeat the enemies of the Reich, and the
apparent invincibility of the German armies in 1914 made them all the more eager to instill some of this militarism in the thousands of Dutch soldiers now serving in the army. But here they ran into the anti-militaristic attitude of the common soldier.

Unlike their German counterpart, Dutch youths were not attracted to uniforms, cursed their bad luck when drafted, and only lived for the day they would be discharged. Discipline for the sake of discipline was not accepted, nor was it clear to very many why someone had to be obeyed simply because he had a higher rank. Recruits said repeatedly that they did not wish to be commanded by NCOs from their own drafts (who were their own age), nor by someone from their own village. The recruits knew that their attitude was shared by the people back home, and so did the officers. With no national pride to provide the impetus for a tough and well-trained army the officers could do little. The task of the commanding officers was especially trying. On the one hand they received surly obedience from the soldiers, on the other hand small thanks (or none at all) from the public. The public blamed the officers for the sloppiness and bad discipline in the army, and the officers held the public largely responsible because it held the officers in such slight esteem. Ironically, the Dutch people laughed at the severe Prussian drill methods, did not want that sort of thing introduced into the Netherlands, but nevertheless would have liked to see their own army march about smartly
and look sharp—all without spending money on uniforms and equipment and without very much discipline being used to achieve that effect. The Dutch could not have it both ways and since money and individualism weighed the heaviest the nation kept a sloppy and ill disciplined army.

2. Missed Opportunities

The lack of popular support for the army may have been an extra burden in creating a good morale in the army, but the military authorities proved themselves somewhat less than imaginative in the programs to achieve this aim. On the whole, the army tried few constructive measures to improve the spirit among the soldiers. A number of good (and rather obvious) chances for winning the men were neglected or were initiated too late. The Netherlands probably had more newspapers per capita of the population than any other country in Europe, but the army's first effort was to introduce a thrice weekly newspaper, the Soldatencourant. The purpose for the soldier's own newspaper was "to bring and maintain within the army a cheerful spirit" as well as provide "interesting news". Each issue would have 50,000 copies and would cost one cent. The first issue went out to the troops on August 19, 1914.

Ten days later General Snijders was asking a number of battalion commanders why the Soldatencourant was not read, why certain companies had sent the bundles with papers back,
and why others had refused to accept the bundles. The answers were many and varied: some men did not think the paper worth the one cent, many preferred to read their own newspapers because they were more interesting, others never read a newspaper, and some men could not read at all. The Soldaten-courant never did fulfill the function it was created for; it was simply too much to ask that one newspaper "maintain within the army a cheerful spirit". The paper never became very popular either, partly because it soon received a great deal of competition. Many things in the Netherlands came in fours—neutral, Socialist, Protestant, and Roman Catholic. This was true for political parties, trade unions and newspapers. Next to the (neutral) Soldatencourant there were soon special newspapers for the soldiers from the three major streams of Dutch thinking.

Military recreational centers (Tehuizen) also came in fours. The official army canteens in the barracks had never been satisfactory because they were usually bleak and unpleasant. Protestant and Catholic Tehuizen had been in existence for a long time and stemmed largely from a desire by the respective religious groups to have a "safe" place for "their" young men to relax. The centers set up by the Socialists after August soon proved to exert the greatest influence and caused the greatest difficulties for the army. But the canteens were not improved and the men continued to seek their relaxation outside the compounds.

A good chance to acquire popularity and esteem was lost
by the Department of Defence when it did not participate in the organized evening education classes for military personnel. Local, provincial, and a national committee sprang to life in September 1914 to provide an opportunity for additional education for soldiers. Many teachers volunteered (a number of them serving in the army) without demanding financial reward, transportation companies provided free travel, and buildings could be used free of charge. A large number of soldiers took advantage of the chance and enrolled in a course. The necessary monies were obtained from private donations, but proved insufficient in the end. The Minister of War decided to give a subsidy of 10,000 guilders (later increased to 25,000). Bosboom had to be asked for this money, he did not offer it, nor did he consider taking part in the planning and execution of the educational courses. He thought it much better to leave everything to the civilian volunteers. 8

When by spring the disillusioned committees analyzed their efforts they found little to cheer about and, of course, the army received the blame. Very few of the eager starters had finished their course because schedules had been interrupted by manoeuvres, guard duties, night exercises, etc. 9 In essence no one had really been at fault. The civilians had known too little about military procedure and working methods and the commanders had not considered the efforts on behalf of the soldiers because they had little contact and knowledge of what was being done. The winter had thus
been lost, many teachers were disillusioned and many soldiers angry that they had not had a chance to continue their studies or improve their meager education.

In June 1915 the army finally took over the idea of educational classes and created a special department of Ontwikkeling en Ontspanning (education and relaxation). That a great need existed was soon obvious; 40,000 men took the 70 courses that were offered. That winter 600 illiterates were taught to read and write. The next winter interest had not slackened; 15,500 men took grade school subjects, or repeated part of their grade school education. Another 950 illiterates were taught to read and write. It was unfortunate that the army had not realized in 1914 the very large role it could play in educating men who had never had that opportunity in civilian life.

Another area where the Department of Defence could have done much, but did not, was the care for discharged soldiers. There was no law that employers were to take back workers called up for military service, and many had to look for new employment when their eight and one half months were finished. In 1904 a group of men had set up the Nationale Vereeniging tot steun aan Miliciens (National Organization to help Conscripts) and in the ten years before 1914 at least 3,000 men had been given financial assistance or had been helped in finding employment. The Vereeniging obtained its money from volunteer contributions, but these would fall far short of what was necessary once the thousands
of mobilized soldiers would be discharged. Arrangements were made with the Nationaal Steun Committee (National Relief Committee) and other special organizations to obtain money and the Vereeniging could recoup 75 per cent of its expenditures; the remainder had to come from volunteer contributions. During the mobilization, 260,000 requests for help from discharged soldiers were received; 237,000 were assisted (37,000 twice) with short term financial aid, obtaining working clothes, tools, employment, living quarters, etc.  

Efforts to have employers promise to take back their workers after their tour of duty were not very successful. Eventually, in 1918, the Department of Defence shouldered the responsibility for the discharged men.

By that time, almost one-quarter of a million men had a bitter taste in their mouths about the way they had been treated. Forced to serve for their country, it had discarded them without a thought when it was finished with them. They had to go and ask for assistance, for clothes, for tools, etc., and the whole experience had done nothing to make them like the army, or be willing to do it again. That such people in the decades that followed did not instill in their children any enthusiasm to serve their country whenever possible is perhaps understandable. The Dutch traditional dislike for military service was thus continued by a new generation and would bear its fruit two decades later. The whole Great War experience which for the Dutch in all walks of life and in all civilian or military functions could have
been a time to re-evaluate past values and re-adjust them to the new conditions in Europe was wasted.

The many petty and silly regulations within the army which make life so needlessly miserable for the common soldier were continued because they had always existed. Such regulations occur in every army but the Dutch had an exceptionally large number of them. Restrictions on free train travel and the many gradations in pay have already been mentioned. Other reasons for complaints were the archaic military laws (not revised since 1815)\textsuperscript{12} which were totally unsuitable for an army of the 20th century, the fact that canteens in the barracks were run by civilians who bid for the privilege and thus charged higher prices than if they had been run non-profit by the army itself, and the ill-fitting and rough uniforms which, by the Commander in Chief's own admission,\textsuperscript{13} detracted from a soldierly bearing and were uncomfortable. The old regulation that everyone higher in rank (officers as well as NCOs) had to be saluted was strictly enforced. For the private this was an irritating nuisance; walking through his camp or along the street of a garrison town he would continually have to salute his numerous superiors. It made walking arm in arm (as was the custom) with one's wife or girlfriend an embarrassing experience rather than a pleasure. For the corporals it was also a regulation which made life needlessly difficult. They usually slept in the same large barrack rooms as the privates and thus got on a friendly and comradely footing with them.
Once outside the barrack room, however, they had to salute each other and use all the formalities prescribed in the military code. It was very difficult to maintain discipline under these circumstances. The excessive attention paid to cursing, swearing and rough language perhaps made sense to a serious young Christian (a definite minority), but not to a young socialist from the Rotterdam harbour district. Placards in all the barracks forbidding bad language had no influence whatever and were for many a source of derision.\textsuperscript{14}

3. Leaves and other Problems

One solution for the soldier was "to get away from it all" by going on leave. As mentioned before, leaves were hard to get, but one could always try writing a Minister and if that proved unsuccessful, employ an "expert". Advertisements in the \textit{NRC} (\textit{Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant}) in November 1914, urged soldiers who "suffered materially" from the mobilization to send all relevant information to the following address. Competent people would then write a request for indefinite leave (or special leave) to the Minister and chances of success were good.\textsuperscript{15} Other help for the barrack-shackled soldier came from parliament and the Minister of War. The latter had from the beginning had differences of opinion with General Snijders about the policy that should be followed in relation to leaves.\textsuperscript{16} Many questions in parliament, letters from numerous organizations, and personal
requests finally forced the General (against his will) to increase the regular leave periods slightly, to allow as many people as possible to go home for the big holidays such as Christmas and Easter, and to set up special leaves for certain occupation groups. The men in these 30 different occupation categories could get from three to six weeks continuous leave, at the time of year when they were busiest in their particular profession or trade. Students could get between 3 and 14 days leave when certain examinations had to be written.

So as not to end in complete chaos, it was decided that the Commander in Chief would be solely responsible for the regular leaves, the Minister of War for the indefinite leaves, and a newly created department would look after the special leaves.

The new measures did not please everyone. The unskilled workers felt slighted because they could never take advantage of the special leaves while those with a trade (plumbers, painters, tailors, etc.) could get up to 24 days. Landowners (dairy farmers, fruitgrowers, bulbgrowers, etc.) could get three, four or six weeks leave. But the labourer was left out.

The General Staff, and especially General Snijders, did not like the new arrangements either. He pointed out that in 1914 harvesting had proceeded without the mobilized men and nothing had been left in the fields. Furthermore, the Netherlands was beginning to experience an unemployment
problem, so why not use the people who had no work? In Germany 10 per cent of the population was in military service, in France it was even higher, 13 per cent; in the Netherlands it was barely four and one-half per cent and all sorts of special leaves had to be granted. To the General it made no sense that the Dutch army be so weakened. The officers saw the Millionen Heere across the border, knew the puniness of the Dutch defensive forces, and wanted every available man.

Politicians viewed the matter differently. They considered the greatest danger now past (some had already urged partial demobilization), thought that there would be enough time to call a second mobilization in case of necessity, and reasoned that a satisfied army was more important than a numerically large one. In their case, "satisfaction" was often equated with "preparedness." Also, the politicians looked at the financial aspects of the matter. Those on indefinite leave did not get paid, of course, but neither did the ones away on special leave.

General Snijders' concern was understandable, however. Until the winter of 1916 there were always roughly 46,000 men away on special or regular leave. Thereafter the percentage was increased so that about 66,000 were away. To the first number must be added the 23,500 engaged in preventing smuggling, and to the latter number the 6,000 "on loan" to the Department of Finance. The effective, daily strength of the army was thus reduced by more than one-third.
The differences of opinion between the politicians and the officers were really a continuation from their pre-war battles, only the numbers had changed. The attitude of the officers was logical; they were given the task to defend the country and they wanted to prepare themselves as best as possible. For them this meant that they should make the army as numerically strong as possible. Considering the national efforts put forth in France, Germany and Great Britain, they believed that the Netherlands could do more. The politicians were much less logical in their reasoning. They had thought it necessary to mobilize the armed forces and believed the situation warranted a continued mobilization, but then they started to whittle away at those forces and tried to pare them down without actually demobilizing part of them. It was very hard for them to shake loose from the pre-war mentality that everything should be weighed on the monetary scale and that every group in the country should, if at all possible, be granted its demands. The government was still so tied to the idea that neutrality meant passivity and that therefore no very strong measures were required that it never even thought of creating a strong army which would not only provide a better defence but also could be used as a lever in dealing with the belligerent nations. There was only a small group of people in the Netherlands who believed this could and should be done, and they never managed to gain sufficient political influence to get their ideas
accepted. They did work behind the scenes hoping to get the army enlarged but were unsuccessful.

An attempt in July 1915 to increase the number of soldiers in the army miscarried. A proposal was introduced to broaden the 1912 Landstorm law so that those who did not have to serve then, could as yet be drafted. A long acrimonious debate took place in the Second Chamber, the outcome of which was that a general conscription law was passed, which became a "relief law"—once the older landstorm drafts were trained the oldest serving landweer and militia drafts were to be sent home. The portion actually serving would thus not increase numerically, only the trained reserve would. Eventually an army of 450,000 men would be available (on paper), but of the 100 "extra" battalions, none had ever worked together. The good officers and NCOs continued to be busy training new recruits, while the many changes of whole drafts, individual transfers and postings, and the men going on special leave, made it virtually impossible for officers and NCOs to get to know their men. In addition, it was now possible to have a "numbers debate" whenever the question of the numerical strength of the army was discussed. The officers would invariably talk about the strength of the army in actual numbers serving, while the politicians would talk about the potential numbers that could be called up. It was again a question of viewing foreign events differently. The military leaders believed that a sudden invasion of the Netherlands could take place without warning, which especially
in the case of Germany, would not leave time for a second mobilization because a large part of the country would be in enemy hands within a few days. The civilian leaders believed that there would be plenty of warning before an attack on the Netherlands would be undertaken and therefore there would be enough time to undertake the necessary measures. In believing this the politicians naively disregarded the example of Belgium.

In spite of the fact that the Dutch were not interested in military matters, the army received a great deal of publicity—most of it of a negative nature. In parliament frequent criticism was heard—from the Left that the military had too much power, that discipline was too severe, and that it was time for demobilization; from the acid-tongued Vrijzinnig-Democrat Marchant that Minister Bosboom was a "yes" man to the General Staff, and from the Right that the Minister and the officers did not pay enough attention to the "spiritual well being" of the men. These criticisms found their way into the press, so everyone could read what was wrong with the army.

In addition, newspapers themselves sought to find fault in the military. The Netherlands was blessed (?) with 92 daily newspapers, 9 of which had 2 daily editions, and 3 had 3 daily editions. Then there were more than 650 weekly, twice weekly, or thrice weekly newspapers in the nation. There were thus always some reporters wandering around an army camp or talking to a few soldiers in a cafe, and
especially the left-leaning papers were eager to print all
the complaints voiced by the men. Poor leadership, bad food,
heavy training, unjust punishment by taking away leave
privileges, drafty and cold barracks, excessively expensive
items in canteens, etc., were all foisted on the public
often without any more proof than one man's word. 30

Complaining came naturally to Dutch soldiers; they did
it frequently and for long periods. Many also thought it
natural to procrastinate, malinger and simulate in order to
get out of as much daily work as possible. When a long march
was the program for the day, it was not at all unusual to
have 10 per cent of the battalion go on sick-call in the
morning. 31 For those not able to get out of the march, the
next best thing was to drop out from "exhaustion", "sickness",
"sore feet", or whatever else one could think of, and make
one's own casual way back to camp. Often sympathetic civil­
ians lavished food and drink on the "poor exhausted fellows".
A drop-out rate of 50 per cent on a march was not uncommon. 32
"Theft, forging leave passes, refusing to salute, being
absent without leave" were other favourites and practised
frequently. 33 When in April 1916 the government had to cancel
all leaves because of a German threat, thousands of soldiers
went home for Easter anyway. 34 It was difficult to shape
such a group of men into a cohesive armed force, especially
since the small number of professional officers and NCOs had
to be employed in training recruits and the majority of
people and parliament refused to allow strong disciplinary
measures to be employed.

4. Anti-Militarism

Anti-militarism increased greatly in the Netherlands after the outbreak of the Great War. Generally speaking, it can be classified in three separate streams, which frequently intermingled only to go their separate ways again at a later date. First there were the many efforts made to bring the war to a conclusion. Among these can be included the Antie-Oorlogsraad (Anti-War Council) instituted by Parliament in October 1914\textsuperscript{35} to find ways and means of bringing the warring nations to the conference table but never achieved anything. Troelstra, leader of the Dutch Socialists, attempted to bring the socialists of the warring nations together in order to bring the war to an end; after many travels and discussions a meeting was finally held in Stockholm in 1917\textsuperscript{36} but nationalism proved very much stronger than internationalism and Troelstra's efforts came to nought. Less well known people in the Netherlands spent time and effort trying to end the war and were equally unsuccessful. Technically these people cannot be called anti-militaristic, but many of the persons involved in this work looked with favour upon the active anti-militarists operating in the Netherlands and aided their efforts.

Second, there were the anarchists, communists and independent socialists (the SDAP at this time was in favour of a
defensive force) who liked to work through publications and clubs to influence the men already serving in the army or were about to be conscripted. Third, there were those who based their anti-militarism on religious convictions. Working publicly through the use of manifestoes, they obtained the greatest publicity but were not solely concerned with influencing the men already in uniform. That the streams ran through each other is shown, for instance, by the fact that Rev. N. J. C. Schermerhorn was director of the in 1904 organized Internationale Anti-Militaristische Vereeniging (IAMV) which had anarchists as its strongest supporters, while communists and socialists also contributed to its upkeep.

The religious anti-militarists did not all belong to one church or one political party. They were a group of people (many pastors among them) who took the Bible literally, saw the army as an institution designed for killing, and therefore opposed it because the Bible stated, "Thou shalt not kill". One had to turn the other cheek regardless of what happened. Such an attitude was not shared by all churches; many Roman Catholics and Gereformeerden had a different interpretation for their Bible and did support the army, but in the Netherlands such extreme religious groups were (and still are) quite common. Today there are still sizable groups who are against all forms of insurance, or against television, or against all inoculations. If a member of a church (which happens to believe that television is a
sin) buys a television set, he is cut off as a member of that church. The situation was quite similar during the time of the Great War and a pastor frequently had so much power and authority in his congregation that he could make his convictions accepted by most of the members of his church. The pastors were not satisfied by stating their views from their pulpits; some went out to preach their message to the men already serving in the army which naturally brought them in conflict with the military authorities who frowned upon this kind of proselytizing.

Already in September 1914 Rev. de Jong was preaching in Christian Militaire Tehuizen that war was immoral, against God's Word, and only served the interest of a few evil persons. Removed from the area in staat van beleg he entered it somewhere else again and had to be removed once more. 39 When Rev. B. de Ligt, preaching a similar message, was also removed from the area in staat van beleg and refused permission to preach to military personnel again, one classis of the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (the largest Protestant church in the Netherlands), declared itself "saddened and indignant" that the military authorities prevented the preaching of the Gospel. 40 In the summer of 1915 a number of pastors came out with a Manifesto, signed by 180 people who promised to go to jail rather than go into military service. 41 By December of that year a fourth edition of the Manifesto was out and had 577 signatures, the fifth edition had over 900 signatures. 42
Efforts by the army to silence the ministers came to nought. The military authorities could only order people out of the area in *staat van beleg*; prosecution had to be left to the Department of Justice. The mild mannered Minister of Justice, Ort, did prosecute, but the whole issue was left in limbo on some technicality during the first trial. Under Article 85 of the (1815) military laws, refusal to carry out a military order was punishable by death. The social and moral climate in the Netherlands, however, made such a punishment totally unacceptable. Consequently, those advocating (or actually) refusing military service were generally charged under Article 133 of the Civil Law Code "inciting an unlawful act", which carried a maximum sentence of three months in jail. There was no law (until 1923) which allowed conscientious objectors freedom from military service, and this increased the problem for the authorities. People got very excited about court cases dealing with freedom of conscience and religion and because of the publicity the matter was often allowed to drop.

Anti-militarism on a very different base was found in the *Mobilizatie Klubs*, which were the Socialist answer to the Protestant and Roman Catholic *Militaire Tehuizen*, and offered recreation for the non-religious soldier. The SDAP always defended any attacks on the clubs, in as well as out of parliament, even though the party did not play a very active directive role in the clubs, nor supervise them closely. It was therefore possible for the leadership of the
clubs to frequently come in hands of more extreme elements who used the clubs for anti-militaristic propaganda. Renaming the clubs Onafhankelijke Ontwikkeling Klubs (Independent Development Clubs) to show their independence from the SDAP, they soon became a great concern for the military authorities.

Programs within the clubs varied greatly. Some had outside speakers come in who explained how the men were trained to fight a war which only benefitted rich capitalists. Other clubs employed more subtle methods such as plays, musical evenings, poetry reading--almost always with an anti-military slant. Most of the forbidden literature would be offered for sale and therein the soldier was urged to do everything from personal preparation for the coming revolution to refusing military service--which would only get him three months in military prison where life was not that bad.

In March 1915 the army investigated the "O en O" club (as they were popularly known) in Leiden and decided that here was the cause of much unrest. Checks in other garrison towns showed the existence of at least 12 other O en O clubs. The Department of Justice refused the request of the General Staff to act against the few civilians involved. General Snijders wrote all his senior officers, explained about the clubs, pointed out the danger, urged caution in dealing with them, and ordered that he be kept informed. The Volksdagblad, organ of the SPD (in 1918 renamed Kommunistische Partij Holland) was forbidden for all military personnel.
All senior officers seemed to have had the same idea—
get rid of the active propagandists. The commanders of the
First and Fourth Divisions, as well as the Commander Field
Army, requested that certain men be posted out of their
command. In April the official organ of the IAMV, De Wapens
Neder (Down the Weapons), was also forbidden and this
proved the beginning of a list which numbered at least 14
different publications by 1918. General Snijders had wanted
to end all political activity by soldiers, regardless of the
political views held or parties involved, and had issued an
order to this effect in August, 1917. The new Minister of
War, De Jonge, was very upset by this order and after a
heated altercation Snijders agreed to withdraw the order.
The prohibited literature was difficult to keep out of the
barracks. Some soldiers received it in plain wrappers in
the mail; others carried it around inside one of the four
"legal" army newspapers.

Transferring the activists from the O en O clubs to
other units did not solve the problem. These men continued
to preach their doctrine in their new surroundings and new
converts were made because boredom and dissatisfaction were
everywhere. Many of the anti-militarists were a cut above
their fellow soldiers. General Weber, commander of the Fourth
Division, wrote about one of them, private Rinkema:

He is dangerous because he is an excellent soldier,
very eager, never yet punished, clear headed, speaks
calmly and sarcastically; a man with 'dare', a man who,
because of his qualities, has to have a great influence
on his comrades.
The general’s fears are easily understood when it is realized that many professional officers, as indicated by the report over Rev. de Jong, viewed their men as dull, unoriginal and easily influenced by good speakers who blamed all the soldiers' troubles on the sneaky rich capitalists for whom this war was fought.

The de Jong report oversimplifies the matter. There were dull and uneducated men in the army willing to follow the revolutionaries. But their number was not large. Almost everyone disliked military service, but that did not make them revolutionary. In Reformed and Roman Catholic circles the House of Orange was held in very high esteem and any talk that the Netherlands should become a republic was an anathema. Many farmers' sons, and middle class people would not hear of a socialist country. Close ties with the church were still held by many Roman Catholics, Gereformeerden, Christelijk Gereformeerden, the small groups right of it, as well as by the orthodox wing of the Hervormde Kerk, and none of these churches had any inclination of overthrowing the existing order.

The argument that workers of all nations should band together had little appeal for the workers now in the army. The international solidarity of the working class had clearly not materialized in 1914, and was now further away than ever. Enough was known about Troelstra's fruitless efforts in getting socialist leaders from various countries to agree upon a formula for peace that most Dutch workers knew inter-
national cooperation of the working class to be a myth. What everyone wanted was to go home and be released of this boredom. The occasional, later increasing to frequent, unrest in the camps had little to do with revolutionary activity; it was a sign of weariness, disgust, and dissatisfaction whereby immediate and personal gripes took on an importance out of all proportion to reality.

The highest military court (3 civilian judges, 2 army and 2 naval officers) became extremely busy judging the serious misdemeanors. Especially the cases involving refusal to serve in the armed forces, or those willing to serve but refusing to bear arms, caused great difficulties for the court. The 1815 law had no real answer for the latter two. A lawyer for the accused could be heard to argue that the stipulated punishment—"the right to serve in the military forces be hereby taken away"—be imposed, while the prosecutor would argue that the prescribed punishment should not be imposed. The laws were not revised, however, and the court continued to struggle on, tremendously overburdened by the great increases in cases it had to handle. In 1915, the first full year of mobilization, the court handled 3,836 cases; in 1916 this number increased to 5,952, in 1917 to 9,735, and in 1918 to 10,562 cases. The deterioration of the armed forces speaks loud and clear from these figures.

The treatment of those unwilling to serve (or bear arms) by certain segments of the population did not help the situation. Unwisely the army in the beginning had placed those
unwilling to bear arms in separate barracks in the regular army camps. (Not until the summer of 1917 were those who refused to bear arms placed in a separate camp.) Of course this led to frequent demonstrations and fights between those willing to serve and those who refused. Ironically, and indicative of the Dutch people's mentality, the latter group was often sent flowers and pastry by the general public living near the camps. Another writer relates how one man who had refused to serve altogether had "done" his three months in jail and on returning to his village had been led around in triumph behind the local band. This sort of thing happened not infrequently. Since the government refused to take strong action, it became progressively more difficult to maintain proper discipline among the troops and demonstrations and minor riots took place with increasing frequency and intensity.

During the first large scale disturbances of the mobilization, in Tilburg in August 1915, a relatively small percentage of the 10,000 soldiers in the city took part. No attempt was made to take over the barracks--only windows were broken and furniture was smashed. On investigation the complaints proved to be the usual--bad food, poor housing, no training uniform, not enough leave, not enough payment for the family back home, stationed too far from home, etc. The small riots in Maastricht on January 31, 1916, had similar causes. The men there were predominantly from the province of Friesland, thought themselves too far from home, did not
get enough leave, etc. In April, 1916, about 30 soldiers left their barracks in Leiden and went home; they were fed up. Most of them had to be arrested in their homes. Such disturbances continued, but they also increased in violence as the mobilization dragged on. On November 6, 1917, soldiers in Laren threw stones through the windows of the officers' quarters and the officers' mess (while the officers were eating). The men had been dissatisfied with their food that afternoon.

These actions show a different mentality from an earlier case where skillful publicity and a carefully hidden threat were used to get results. In July 1915 a company of bicyclists stationed in Helmont sent a telegram to Queen Wilhelmina:

Request immediate investigation into the inhuman treatment given the First Company Bicyclists as otherwise serious clashes will be unavoidable.

A few hours after the telegram was sent the colonel of the battalion promised an investigation and thereafter substantial improvements were made.

In the last two years of the war, troops had to be used quite often to quell minor civilian food riots in the big cities. It happened not infrequently that soldiers refused to act against the civilians (often women) and marched back to their barracks, or made common cause with them. Such incidents were usually reported in the newspapers and did nothing to heighten the authorities' confidence in the army, nor increase the morale and unity among the troops. Apart from the differences of opinion whether one should serve or
refuse to bear arms, there was the additional division whether one should act against the civilian population.

By the summer of 1918 the mood had become grimmer, but not necessarily more revolutionary. Complaints increased, and in typical Dutch fashion, so did the number of organizations—perhaps more aptly described as pressure groups or interest groups. A *Vereeniging van Landstormplichtigen* was born, as well as a *Bond van Landweermannen*. Both had the obvious function of looking after the interest of their particular draftees. The mobilization clubs had also tightened their organization and by late 1917, Matthijsen, party secretary of the SDAP managed to combine the three aforementioned organizations into the *Bond van Nederlandsche Dienstplichtigen* (Alliance of the Dutch Conscripts)—with a total membership of 7,000. The *Bond* supported the SDAP in the 1918 elections.

Among the NCOs there were grievances about pay and the lack of democratic decision making and they set up their own organization. This soon multiplied into the familiar four organizations, but they all worked together during the election and managed to get one man (W. Wijk) into parliament. The political party of the NCOs was known as either the *Onderofficieren Partij*, or the *Democratische Weermachtspartij*.

The multiplication of parties and organizations indicates that there were many grievances held by almost all groups. It also indicates, by the kind of pressure the groups tried to exert, that the great majority wanted to employ the legal means open to them and not use the revolutionary path.
the few syndicalists, anarchists and communists advocated.

5. Attempts to Make Military Service Popular

A few attempts were made to bend the national character into a more positive direction regarding the attitude towards military service. On the official level, military parades were organized, exhibitions were held, manoeuvres were conducted to which the general public was invited, and the Queen on numerous occasions inspected the troops, an event always given a great deal of publicity. There were people who had interest in the army or navy, either because they were part of old, established army or naval officers' families, or because they had vested interests in the Dutch East Indies and wanted a powerful fleet, or simply because they sincerely believed that the Netherlands should have as strong a defence force as possible. Many of these people were willing to spend time and money in the hope of winning more Dutch people to their point of view. The most noticeable result of these efforts were a number of nice, glossy, monthly publications such as Onze Vloot (Our Fleet), Ons Leger (Our Army), and Onze Neutraliteit (Our Neutrality), which tried to show the interesting side of military life, urged support for the armed forces, and impressed upon the public the need for a strong defensive force in these precarious times. The people behind these publications tried repeatedly to get the Dutch press to print articles which
would foster interest in the armed forces, but the national press showed little interest because such articles were not read. The proponents of a well armed Netherlands fought an uphill battle and never breached the wall of traditional Dutch indifference and dislike toward things military.

An excellent example of Dutch unwillingness to exert themselves for their country occurred in 1915. A group of prominent persons conceived the idea of preparing lists of people who in an emergency would be ready to help the government. All one had to do was give one's name, address, age, occupation or profession, and any additional skills one might have. Lists would be compiled of all those occupations and professions with cross references so the government could immediately select a certain person with a certain skill in any locality. The idea was promoted with much publicity; many areas were canvassed, pamphlets were sent out and by December 27, 1915, the government was presented with the complete list. It had 496 names. By the organizers' own rueful admission a very much shorter list than anticipated. The extent of such apathy clearly demonstrates that people did not care.

Parliament was equally unwilling to take preventive measures. Thousands of laws were passed during these four years, but almost all were a reaction to a new situation or condition which had arisen through domestic circumstances or from foreign pressures or actions. To look ahead and take forceful preventive action against possibilities which might
arise was not in the nature of parliament. This was so in the controversy with General Snijders regarding the defence of the Netherlands (see next chapter) as well as with the proposal for a law whereby everyone not already serving in the armed forces would be at the disposal of the government in case of a national emergency. Introduction of this proposal came when for the second time during the war (the first time was in April 1916) the Netherlands was very close to being invaded by Germany. But the Second Chamber refused to discuss the proposal; the situation was not taken seriously, and to pass such a drastic measure for possible future war seemed much too extreme a deed for the parliamentarians. The old saying "every nation gets the government it deserves" is especially apt for the Netherlands during the time of the Great War.

It was definitely more difficult to create interest and enthusiasm for military service in the Netherlands than in the nations at war. There, chauvinism, patriotism, hatred for the enemy, and fighting for a cause, were powerful ideas and emotions used to draw men into the armies. Heroism, death at the front, was something to be proud of (at least in the beginning). In the Netherlands most of these fine phrases could not be used. Neutrality meant impartiality so there was no enemy to hate. Catching smugglers was hardly heroic, nor was sitting idle in a fort. Pride in defending your country was hardly an argument for the matter-of-fact Dutch.
After the first few months most said "no one is going to attack us, why all the bother?"

On the other hand, the government did not attempt to make service attractive by providing comfortable quarters or uniforms, by paying well, by having good equipment and modern weapons. The army was not shielded from excessive and useless criticism in press and parliament. Everyone could say what he liked, and the army had no voice with which it could answer.

No one in parliament was ignorant of the shortcomings of the army. They all had heard the Minister of War speak time and again about the impossibility of getting much needed weapons from abroad, and about the unwillingness or inability of domestic industries to accept army orders for difficult to make equipment. During the last three years, each issue of the Soldatencourant carried two to four columns of "correspondence" which amounted to endless questions by soldiers about pay, leave, promotion, cost of living allowance, etc. There was a general unhappiness about things and that the soldiers wrote the "official" paper so often is indicative of the situation and also of the officers who should have been asked these questions. The men either did not trust them enough, or found them hard to approach. Any senior officer reading between the lines of the Soldatencourant could know what bothered the army—and could have worked for an amelioration of the situation.

The government could have done much more in a very different field. It could have acted much more forcefully in
its foreign policy. Neutrality as practised by the govern-
ment (and which the army had to be ready to defend) was a
position of weakness from which then one, then the other
warring nation made use—and misuse. In turn they accused
the Netherlands of helping the opponent and punishment would
follow; the punishment always hit the economy, making the
country progressively weaker. Not once did the government
consider creating a strong, efficient army and telling
Germany "sell us the coal and iron we need or we join the
allies" or telling Great Britain, "allow our ships to travel
unhindered or we will side with Germany". The balance of
forces during the war was often so close that both sides
would rather have made some concessions than face an extra
half million trained men. Even if the Dutch had never
intended to join the conflict, such a strong position could
have improved the economy of the nation; it would have pro-
vided a psychological lift for the soldiers and instilled
pride in them knowing that the threat of involvement had
forced their big neighbours to be a little more considerate.
But the government (and the nation) adhered to its pre-war
conception of neutrality—fairness and impartiality to all—
not realizing that in a World War even neutrals should act
more forcefully.
CHAPTER V
Conflicting Ideas About Defence

1. The Problem

It was common knowledge in the Netherlands that the military and civilian authorities held different views on the number and extent of leaves necessary, the severeness of discipline required, the essential size of the mobilized army, etc., but it was not generally known that there were diverging opinions about the strategic defence of the country. Superficially the two authorities appeared in harmony because both were determined to defend the Netherlands against an invasion, but on the basic measures necessary to withstand such an attack the two sides held diverging views.

Although the differences were very important for the Netherlands at this time, such contrary views were not typically Dutch; civilian and military leaders frequently do not see eye to eye when it comes to questions of defence, weapons, war, or neutrality. The latter tend to view things only from the military vantage point and begin to see the safety of their country as the only important objective to which all others must be subordinated. The former have to take a broader view and consider defence as only one of the problems facing the nation. In war, or in times of extreme tension, the question of defence takes on a greater urgency; so in the Netherlands.
The government understood Dutch neutrality as a friendly notice to the warring nations that the Netherlands did not wish to become involved in their quarrel. It meant certain duties and obligations on the part of the Netherlands, but as long as these were fulfilled, there was little chance that anyone would attack the country. The military men did not believe that the Declaration of Neutrality would necessarily preserve the Netherlands from aggression by the belligerents and therefore were concerned with being prepared at all times to meet a potential invasion. It was therefore to Dutch advantage if the number of possible enemies was reduced to a minimum. The government, on the other hand, thought that an impartial and fair attitude towards all and a prepared defence against all possible enemies was the best for the Netherlands.

General Snijders, as head of the armed forces and as the man responsible for the tactical deployment of the troops and fleet, thought the government's conception of neutrality very dangerous from a strategic point of view. The General wrote many notes to the government suggesting that he be given more definite instructions regarding the defence of the country because his forces were simply too weak to guard against possible attacks from three directions. In his first memorandum dealing with this subject (on February 22, 1915)\textsuperscript{1} Snijders wanted to know if the government thought war with one side a priori unthinkable, and whether all intentional infringement on Dutch sovereignty must be combatted with armed force
even if this meant full-scale war. Finally, Snijders demanded that, if relations with one side deteriorated to such an extent that war was considered likely, help be sought from the other side before hostilities commenced. This was especially urgent in case the enemy was to be Germany because the war should, if at all possible, be fought outside the Dutch borders and this could not be done without aid from the Entente.

Four days later the General had his answer. The government realized the difficulties involved in maintaining defensive positions against three sides (south, west, east), but it could not change its relations to the countries at war and an *a priori* exclusion of hostilities with one side was not visualized.

It was unfortunate that the Dutch government saw no other way than a continuation of its passive and timid foreign policy. A more positive and stronger stand on the part of the Netherlands might well have made things much easier for the country. There are several indications that Germany was quick to adopt a cautious and accommodating attitude when the Netherlands acted more forcefully. On March 25, 1915, the Dutch ship, *Medea*, was torpedoed in the English Channel, and the same lot befell the *Katwijk* on April 14 when it was riding at anchor near the light-ship *Noord-Hinde*. The two sinkings aroused anger in the Netherlands, and the government sent a strong protest to Germany demanding restitution for
the losses. The British tried to take advantage of the situation by offering the Dutch an alliance and promised 150,000 men to support the Netherlands from a German attack. Alarmed by the turn of events the Germans sent a formal apology, reimbursed the cost of the Katwijk and its cargo, and ordered its submarine commanders to take the utmost precaution not to sink Dutch vessels "as the mood of the Dutch is very hostile because of the sinking of the Katwijk". Bethmann Hollweg in a telegram to von Treutler, one of the Kaiser's adjutants, voiced the fear that the Netherlands would not defend herself against a British landing on her coast but would side with the invaders. It would therefore be wise for Germany to curb talk of annexing Belgium because this only made the Dutch more anti-German.

Had the Dutch maintained their forceful stand, quite conceivably they would have had less pressure—at least from the German side—in the coming years. Instead, the government sank back to a submissive position of trying to please both sides, accepting ever more trade restrictions from the British and sinking of ships from the Germans.

In August, 1915, Snijders once again tried to convince the government that it should reconsider the neutral position of the Netherlands. The Commander in Chief may well have been prompted to write his long memorandum because of criticism in parliament where the deployment of the Dutch forces had been termed "chaotic". Snijders explained that as long as he had to be prepared for all eventualities, had to prevent smuggling
and had to guard the interning camps, with the few troops at his disposal, it was impossible to deploy the army in any other way. The Field Army could not be maintained as an integral force, even divisions had to be broken up and assigned individual defensive positions. The large number of leaves weakened the army, there was a chronic shortage of men, and the second mobilization the parliamentarians always talked about could not be counted upon to solve the problems in case of a sudden attack. In such an event the railways would have to transport the scattered troops to their proper locations as well as bring the called-up men to their destinations and this could not be done in one day. If the attacker were Germany, extensive disruptions of the transportation network could be expected by the second day.

Snijders' persistence did result in a top level meeting between several senior officers, the Premier and the Minister of War; they decided however, to bring no change in the existing situation.9

The Dutch Commander in Chief was an able military leader, but like many older generals during the Great War he was infatuated with numbers. Snijders tended to neglect the importance of better weapons and new tactics and saw the answer for the Netherlands in a numerically increased army, more internal power for the military, and a reduction in the number of possible enemies. He can be criticized for thinking the numbers game, as Falkenhayn, Haig, Nivelle, etc., were doing, and for neglecting the possibilities offered by
the peculiar Dutch topography to build very strong defences. Since the official Dutch position did not consider anything but defence, Snijders could have sought the answer in increased defensive positions as easily as in more men. The Dutch general did not have the imagination to think of anything different than the existing, military solutions and consequently could only suggest two things to his government: reduce the possible enemies and enlarge the army. The Dutch government, tied to its pre-war conception of neutrality and very much aware of the people's anti-military sentiments, would not accept the Commander in Chief's suggestions.

Military-civilian differences such as this were not confined to the Netherlands. In France, Britain and Germany similar conflicts took place. The situation differed there only in that the power struggle centered on what was necessary to win the war; in essence the problem was the same as in the Netherlands. The military always demanded more than the civilians were willing, or able, to give. In Britain, Kitchener virtually had his way, but Haig had much more difficulty getting what he thought he needed when Lloyd George became Prime Minister. The conflict between the latter two is well known and need not be enlarged upon here. In Germany the military authorities gained tremendous power—not only as far as strategy and man power were concerned; they also managed to get the economy of the country in the service of the armed forces. Such power was never obtained, nor desired by the Dutch military leaders: all they wanted was a reasonable chance of
success in the event their country was attacked.

The Dutch government frustrated the aims of the military because it tried as much as possible to continue a peace-time economy even though most of Europe was engulfed in war. Such an economy was maintained by means of rationing schemes, subsidies, surrogates, bartering with other nations, and sometimes begging the warring powers to allow more imports to enter the Netherlands. Such attempts were not wrong, but like the proposals of General Snijders, they did not get beyond the familiar, existing frame of thought. The potential of the Netherlands was not explored. The nation, small as it was, was not used as a weight which could conceivably tip the military balance in the stalemated war. The Dutch politicians were too timid to adopt such a policy, the people too lethargic to demand it, and the military too defense-minded to consider it.

Two serious crises during the war proved that passivity did not guarantee the Netherlands freedom from foreign threats and pressures.

2. First Crisis

That sudden and dangerous emergencies could occur without warning was demonstrated on March 30, 1916. On that date Ambassador Gevers wired from Berlin that State Secretary von Jagow had notified him that the British were concentrating ships and troops in the Thames and Humber Rivers for an attack
on the Scheldt estuary. The German government demanded guarantees that the Dutch would defend themselves against this attack otherwise Germany would take the necessary measures even if this involved infringement on Dutch neutrality.

Immediately there was great tension in the government which knew nothing of any British preparations but nevertheless thought it had to act. It wanted all leaves cancelled, but General Snijders, after consultation with his staff declared himself against this; the army did not believe the Germans. Snijders pointed out that this situation was exactly what he had written about in February, 1915. Would the government now take a stand as to whom to fight and whom to side with? The government refused. It maintained its resolution to defend against both sides, in spite of the army's objection that in the flat islands of Zeeland the Dutch forces would be destroyed. After discussions with the Minister of War, it was decided to cancel regular leaves but to allow those on special and indefinite leave to remain at home. The order went out the morning of the 31st, but the government neglected to inform the country why this measure was taken. Consequently the wildest rumours started, a run on the banks resulted, and people began to stockpile food.

On April 2 a reassuring telegram arrived from Ambassador Gevers. The Germans had made a mistake; they were pleased with the way the situation had been handled, and they were sorry for the inconveniences they had caused. On Gevers' question whether the Germans had not been looking for an excuse
to occupy part of the Dutch coast line von Jagow answered with a definite no.

The Dutch government was now faced with a political problem. It believed that the leaves could not be reinstated immediately without it being accused of panicking for nothing and acting against the advice of the army. Leaves remained cancelled which caused all sorts of misery for the army officers because the soldiers were embittered that special leaves continued while they could not go home for Easter. Thousands simply left for home without a pass when that time arrived\(^1\) and when Snijders ordered punishment for those who had done so he was criticised severely in parliament and the press. On May 12 the government announced that regular leaves would start again on June 1 which prompted the obvious question how the government could know three weeks in advance that the crisis would then be over.

The reasons for the German warning on March 30 are of importance because they show how the German military leaders viewed the Netherlands, and that they projected the same attitude they had when they invaded Belgium—if it is necessary for military purposes it must be done—onto Great Britain. As long as the Germans believed that "perfidious Albion" might invade the Netherlands with the same lack of compunction they themselves had had in invading Belgium, they would keep the Netherlands under careful military surveillance.

General Snijders thought that the March warning had been an act of spite on the part of the German General Staff because
their two attempts to take up contact with the Dutch military authorities (in 1915 and February 1916) had been rebuffed. What the German intentions were with these "feelers" can only be guessed; presumably it was an attempt for closer military cooperation with the Dutch against a possible British attack. German apprehensions about the Netherlands being an open gate through which Britain could enter stemmed from before the war. In 1912 the well-known General Friedrich von Bernhardi had written:

[In case of hostilities] the allied Great Powers would attempt to turn our strategic right flank through Belgium and Holland and penetrate into the heart of Germany through the gap in the fortresses between Wesel and Flushing...

Our Western frontier, in itself strong, can be easily turned on the north through Belgium and Holland. No natural obstacle, no strong fortresses, are there to oppose a hostile invasion, and neutrality is only a paper bulwark.

As mentioned before, the German Chancellor alluded to the same problem in 1915 and General von Kuhl, Chief of Staff of the 4th Army, and later of Prince Ruprecht's Army-Group, expanded on the idea in his book.

Now that the front was stabilized and neither side seemed capable of a breakthrough the German High Command seriously considered the possibility of the British trying to come in through the back door. They tried something of this nature in the Dardenelles in April 1915, while in 1809 they had attempted to reach Antwerp through a landing on the island, Walcheren. A landing there now would enable them to install heavy artillery and shell Zeebrugge with impunity.
making it untenable as a German submarine base. And they would pose a constant threat to the rear of the 4th Army because they could put 15,000 men across the Scheldt in 12 hours. The Germans, not possessing equipment to cross the Scheldt, would have to fight their way through Brabant and along the narrow, easily defended neck of Zuid Beveland in order to reach the British. If the British landed in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, the rear of the 4th Army would be immediately threatened and a link-up with the British forces in Flanders was quite conceivable.

Under Falkenhayn things did not move beyond the planning stage; once Hindenburg and Ludendorff took over the direction of the armed forces on August 29, 1916, action was taken. A separate coastal defence and frontier guard command was set up under Lt-General Ilse. Because Germany was deeply engaged in Rumania only two marine divisions could be spared, but once more troops became available the command was strengthened so that by January 1917, two commando groups and 9-1/2 infantry divisions were present on the Dutch frontier and along the Belgian coast.  

General Snijders and the Dutch General Staff could not know all that the German commanders were thinking but from a strategic point of view it was obvious that Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and the Scheldt area were of great importance to both Germany and Britain. The Dutch had strengthened Walcheren and Zuid-Beveland (against a sea as well as a land attack) but the efforts were puny compared to what Britain or Germany could bring to bear. Snijders considered the situation very precarious.
because a British landing would immediately bring a German invasion as well and he was expected to defend against both. Snijders did not think that the British would violate Dutch neutrality as easily as the Germans assumed, but he did not exclude the possibility that, if for instance the United States came into the war and the Western Front remained immobile, the allies would attack through the Netherlands. In the hope of receiving more definite instructions than "defence against three sides" Snijders wrote again to Premier Cort van der Linden on January 30, 1917.\textsuperscript{19}

The Commander in Chief drew the attention of the government to a recent public statement by General Wille, Commander in Chief of the Swiss forces, that Switzerland would fight any invader, would automatically consider the other side an ally and invite its troops into Switzerland to fight the first attacker. Snijders thought this position of neutrality very much more effective than that of the Dutch government. It could just as easily be made the Dutch position and would act as a deterrent against Britain as well as Germany. If the government did not wish to follow the Swiss example an order should be issued, based upon the political situation of the moment, on who would \textit{a priori} be excluded from becoming an enemy. The condition of the armed forces of the Netherlands, and her geographic location did not allow the present situation to continue.

On February 9, 1917 the government sent its answer\textsuperscript{20}—nothing was to change. Minister Bosboom had added a list of
possible situations that could arise and the probable action that should be taken in each case. Snijders' comments in the margin of the document clearly indicate he rejected some of the hypotheses as totally unrealistic and others as not dealing with the situation as it existed. He was especially angered that the Minister seemed to think there would be time for consultation (even protests against the attackers), or calling a second mobilization. The commander in Chief's anger and disappointment are easy to see in his answer to the government. He must have been astonished at the apparently casual manner the government treated his demands, as if nothing could possibly harm the Netherlands. Yet Snijders knew, as the government knew, that the Ambassador to France had sent two separate warnings obtained from two different sources, that Germany was planning an attack on the Scheldt estuary. To the Dutch General Staff this seemed a logical move because on February 1 the Germans had started their unrestricted submarine warfare and the harbours in the Scheldt estuary, as well as opening the port of Antwerp, would greatly benefit the submarines. The Dutch knew that there were about 40,000 German troops drawn together near their border and since Germany was still flushed with its victory over Rumania, an attack seemed quite probable. All the more astonishing then to have Bosboom write Snijders on February 17 and only talk about cancelling special leaves as well as regular ones when it proved necessary to take such a step.
The following day Ambassador Gevers reported on a conversation he had with Dr. Kriege (Director, Department of Foreign Affairs) wherein he was told that Ludendorff expected a British attack on the Scheldt in order to destroy Zeebrugge and hit the 4th Army in the rear. Dr. Kriege emphasized the importance of a Dutch defence against this because Germany could not remain a passive observer if the Dutch could not handle the situation. In such an event there would be no time for consultation, and it would therefore be advantageous for both sides if some discussion could be held now. Gevers politely declined the invitation.

That same day (February 18) G.S. IV intercepted a telegram from the German military attaché in the Hague wherein he urged his superiors to sink all Dutch ships found in the forbidden zones. According to him there was nothing to fear from the Dutch as long as the German troops remained on the border.

Snijders sent the intercepted telegram to the Cabinet, perhaps in the hope that a firmer stand would be adopted now that the Germans were becoming so bold. He also complained that Ambassador Gevers should have been much firmer in refusing the offer of Dutch-German consultation. All the Commander in Chief obtained for his efforts was a letter from Bosboom, reiterated by Cort van der Linden on March 8, telling him that the Dutch armed forces had no other goal than defending Dutch territory and that this still meant defence against three sides.
After Snijders had received the last communication he seemed at his wits end. He scribbled in the margin of the document, "But what am I supposed to do now? The government knows I will NOT fight against both sides." The government did not know this because the Commander in Chief had never made it explicitly clear. He must have believed he had, however, because he wrote the Commander of the Scheldt and Meuse estuaries:

I told the government explicitly that the Dutch armed forces could not fight both belligerents simultaneously, and that such an order could not be accepted. The government has accepted my reasons for such a decision.

With such misunderstanding between the government and the Commander in Chief, it was very fortunate for the Netherlands that no British invasion took place. Snijders expected one, especially now that the United States seemed ready to join the conflict (and did so April 6, 1917). The Germans apparently still believed in it also because they continued to reinforce their defences along the south-west Dutch border—something which did not go unnoticed by the Dutch.

In May, 1917 General von Moser was appointed to organize the Hollandstellung and coordinate the efforts of Generals Ilse and von Kuhl and Admirals von Holtzendorff (Chief of the Admiral Staff) and von Schroeder (Commander Marine Corps). The various efforts and plans included, among others, a special "Scheldt Division" which was to cross the river and land between Bath and Krabbendijke where it was to hold the narrow neck of land and prevent the
British from breaking out until other German troops had arrived via Brabant. The heavy "Batterie Wilhelm II" (305 mm. shells weighing 1,000 pounds) near Knokke had the exact range of Vlissingen, Middelburg and other Dutch cities to hinder a British landing and prevent troop concentrations thereafter.  

No invasion materialized and the new Minister of War, Jhr, de Jonge, who replaced Bosboom for political reasons in June, had a few months to get used to his position. There was soon tension enough again. The United States demanded the use of Dutch ships in return for grain; Britain insisted that the transfer of sand and gravel from Germany to Belgium via the Dutch waterways be stopped, while Germany wanted it to continue.

3. Second Crisis

The sand and gravel shipments had been a source of friction since 1915. Germany insisted that the increase in tonnage was due to the fact that Belgian imports from France and Britain now had to come from Germany; and that much war damage to quays and dikes had to be repaired. Britain and France maintained that the extra amounts were used for fortifications. For three years a great deal of diplomatic energy was expended in attempts to reach a solution acceptable to both sides. No compromise could be reached and on October 7, 1917 Britain punished the Netherlands by refusing
all facilities for the transmission of cable messages (which virtually cut all overseas links for the Netherlands). Hard diplomatic work caused the embargo on wireless transmissions to be lifted in February 1918 with the understanding that Great Britain would take any steps she thought necessary if by March 15 the differences were not resolved.  

By that date the situation had become very serious for the Netherlands. Since the beginning of the year the United States had demanded that a large part of the Dutch merchant fleet be placed at the disposal of the allies. The Germans wanted the railway line from Dalheim (Germany) to Hamont (Belgium), which went through the narrow neck of Limburg, reopened. (It had been closed at the outbreak of war.) The strongest pressure was first applied by the allies--the Netherlands would not get the 100,000 tons grain it desperately needed unless the Dutch allowed the allies the use of their ships. And in the event that the Netherlands still refused, the allies would take the ships under the old Right of Angary. The Netherlands felt it had no choice and on March 20 gave in under strong protest. They did so in spite of the German threat that all coal and iron exports would be stopped. The allies gained 700,000 tons of merchant shipping. Unrest and indignation was great in the country. General Snijders demanded that a second mobilization be called. Troelstra, leader of the SDAP, warned the government that it was too soft and gave in too easily to foreign pressure, and those who had interests in the Dutch East Indies were incensed.
with the government because now all connections with the colonies were broken. The German press accused the Netherlands of partiality in favour of the allies. By March 22 the excitement had died down a little; the unexpected German offensive on March 21 held everyone's attention.

The offensive was the catalyst for the most serious crisis the Netherlands had to face during the war. Ludendorff was gambling his last card on his March Offensive and would just as soon invade the Netherlands as have it take a decision detrimental to the German war effort. He now needed every possible transportation artery to keep his attack going and that meant the Dalheim-Hamont line had to be opened. The German Supreme Command had obtained extensive political power in Germany by this time; Ludendorff was corresponding directly with German ambassadors abroad. On March 21 he wrote the German Ambassador to the Netherlands, Dr. Rosen, and instructed him to tell the Dutch government that in compensation for having given their ships to the allies they would have to open the railway line and allow the transfer of troops on it, allow passage of the German ships still in Antwerp (since 1914), consent that sand and gravel as well as war materials be shipped through Dutch waterways.

Dr. Rosen was well disposed toward the Netherlands, did not think she could have prevented her ships from falling in Allied hands, and did not want to see her at war with Germany. He therefore did not deliver the note, tried to convince Foreign Minister Louden of the seriousness of the
situation and when this did not prove possible took the
unusual step of contacting Dutch party leaders and explained
to them the precarious position of their country. By the
time Rosen handed Louden the official German demands (on
April 24 and 25) they had been watered down somewhat—no
troops or war material would be sent across Dutch territory—but enough information had leaked out that the mood in the
Netherlands was very tense. On April 23, Snijders had already
warned all commanders to be prepared for cancellation of
leaves and a possible second mobilization. He also asked for
all possible information on German troop concentrations in
Germany and Belgium.

The Premier, the Minister of War, and the Commander in
Chief had several meetings during these tense days, and
Snijders seemed quite pessimistic about Dutch chances of
defending themselves. Cort van der Linden blamed this pessi-
mism on the fact that the General's wife had recently died and did not attach any other significance to it. Within a
few days the matter would come up again, however, and this
time with serious consequences.

After the second German demand had been received on
April 25 the government appeared suddenly to realize the
seriousness of the situation. Leaves for the armed forces
were cancelled, and a (closed) emergency debate of the Second
Chamber was held. The debate was stormy but most Members
thought it the better part of valour to give in to the
German demands.
The Netherlands remained out of the war, but the price had been the loss of her merchant fleet and having German trains moving across Dutch territory. Luckily the Allies did not "up the ante" by demanding the Netherlands now give them another concession in turn. They were very hard pressed by the German attacks in France, perhaps were rather ashamed in the way they had acquired the Dutch fleet, and realized that the Dutch could not extricate themselves from the German demands without either giving in or going to war.46

For the Dutch people the loss of their fleet was a bitter humiliation and the anger and frustration was great. Acquiescence to the German demands had caused less indignation but many felt resentful that their nation was so helpless. There was no public outcry for a more forceful attitude, however; the reports of the bitter fighting in France soon convinced most people that the Netherlands should be thankful to remain out of the holocaust. In the next decades the Dutch remembered only that they had stayed out; they forgot the humiliation and frustration of being pushed around by others. They also refused to consider that a more forceful attitude might have commanded more respect in other countries and therefore meant less pressure on the Netherlands. Generally speaking, the two crises taught the Dutch nothing.

One important consequence of the 1918 crisis was a major conflict between General Snijders and the Minister of War de Jonge. On April 26 the Minister of War had had a
meeting with the Commander in Chief and the latter had declared, in front of Major Insinger and Captain Roell that defence against Germany was "useless" while a war against the Allies was "less unfavourable". From April 27 to May 8 de Jonge talked with Maj-General Burger, Vice-Chief of the General Staff, Lt-General Pop, who had become Chief of Staff in 1917, Colonel van der Voorst Maarschalk, Commander of the Waterlinie, Colonel Fabius, Commander Groep Naarden, and Lt-General Terwisga, Commander Field Army. Of these men only General Pop shared General Snijders' opinion that defence against Germany was useless; the other four men thought it feasible—to a greater or lesser degree—to defend against the German forces for a certain length of time. On May 8 de Jonge wrote a memorandum to the Cabinet wherein he related the various opinions, sketched the situation in the Dutch army, gave a brief account of the weapons available, declared to have lost faith in the Commander in Chief, and suggested he be relieved of his post. Two days later de Jonge asked General Burger if he would be willing to take over as Commander in Chief. The answer was affirmative. For obvious reasons de Jonge passed over General Pop who earlier had been recommended by Snijders as his replacement in case of his own sickness or death.

The Cabinet discussed de Jonge's memorandum, did not quite know what to do with it and asked the Queen for advice. She wanted both men to stay at their posts. There would be an election soon and resignations now would only cause unrest
and needless speculation. 51 Both men agreed to stay but the matter did not end there. On May 29, Snijders wrote a long memorandum 52 to the government explaining that the word "useless" did not mean the immediate collapse of the Dutch forces as soon as the Germans entered, but rather that in a very short time the Netherlands would be defeated. For support Snijders cited the reports of his military attaché in Berlin, Muller-Massis, who had repeatedly written that Germany, picking its own time and place, would disrupt the Dutch second mobilization and very quickly reach the Stelling Holland. 53 Snijders further pointed out that the army had enough artillery shells for 10 fighting days, 2 hand grenades per man, 10,740 steel helmets, and only 5,130 gas masks which gave protection against the new German gases.

Factually Snijders' report did not differ much from that of de Jonge (of May 8), but the conclusions were virtually opposite. De Jonge appears to have discounted the need for gasmasks, nor did he seem impressed with the German March Offensive—where on the first day the Germans advanced 40 miles after first breaking the British line. Snijders, on the other hand, must have been very impressed with this feat of arms, as well as with the German achievements in the just begun Third Battle of the Aisne (May 27-June 6) when the Germans broke the strong French defensive line "Chemin des Dames" and advanced 13 miles that first day. The Dutch Commander in Chief must have wondered how far the Germans would come in one day against the inexperienced and poorly
equipped Dutch forces. This was an especially worrisome question since Snijders three days earlier (on May 26) had received a report from his military attaché in London about possible military assistance from the Allies in case of a German attack.\textsuperscript{54} Snijders had verbally instructed Captain Tonnet to contact the Allies and prepare such a report. The Commander in Chief did not inform the government of this action because it would have been considered a breach of the neutrality position of the Netherlands. Nor did Snijders mention the information he had received in his memorandum to the government. Among other things, the Allies demanded, according to Captain Tonnet:

> The whole defence of the Netherlands must immediately become subordinate to the Allied Supreme Command... The Netherland Field Army must not take action, outside its prepared defences, in order to prevent an invasion of troops of the Central Powers.

To Snijders it was clear from this that no immediate help would be forthcoming and that the Allies only saw the defence of the Netherlands in the larger sphere of defeating Germany. The Dutch forces must only defend the \textit{Stelling Holland} which would serve as a bridgehead for the Allies.

Queen Wilhelmina wrote General Snijders on June 14 to express her confidence in him,\textsuperscript{55} but Minister de Jonge got in the last blow. He left a memorandum\textsuperscript{56} for his successor wherein he voiced his misgivings about Snijders' abilities as Commander in Chief as well as listed a number of things left undone—certain defensive works had not been constructed, there was no central inundation bureau, there were too many
"loose" battalions which should have been brought into brigade or division formation, the bulk of the forces was still in the south from where they should have been removed long ago.

To what extent the new Minister of War was influenced by this document is difficult to say. Certain is that the relationship between him and Snijders was never very cordial and that they soon became embroiled in a new controversy. In the end it was Snijders who had to leave.

Before the elections took place (on July 3) the cabinet had decided it would resign regardless of the outcome of the election. In 1917 the Constitution had been changed and this was the first election with full male suffrage. The results were interesting although hardly designed for efficient government--over 30 parties contested the election and 17 obtained at least one seat in parliament. Eight parties captured one seat. The largest party was the RKSP (Roman Catholics) with 30 seats, followed by the SDAP with 22. Two other Socialist parties were represented by one man each, while the Communists held two seats. Because the SDAP still refused to form part of any government, the government was formed by the "right" (the various Liberal parties had lost a great many seats). It took over two months to form a new government; by September 9, Ruys de Beerenbrouck (RKSP) finally managed to form a government composed of men of his own party, the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (ARP), and the Christelijke Historische Unie (CHU).
The new Minister of War, G. A. A. Alting von Geusau, was kind enough to show General Snijders the memorandum left by de Jonge, but there seems to have been no discussion about it. The Minister did not like the 1914 instructions which made the Commander in Chief responsible to the whole Cabinet and wanted to change it; Snijders vigorously opposed such a change and it appears he had his way. Alting von Geusau had the last word, however. After the riots in the military camps on October 25 and 26 he instituted a committee of investigation under the chairmanship of the ex-Minister de Jonge. Snijders' strong protests against this were to no avail. By this time the relationship between the Commander in Chief and the government, and the general situation in the Netherlands, had deteriorated to such an extent that the government decided to get rid of General Snijders.

The conflict between the Commander in Chief and the various Ministers of War cannot be solely blamed on personality clashes. There was a basic dichotomy between the military and civilian leaders on a number of points. Both sides agreed that the Netherlands should remain neutral, and while the government practised this neutrality from a position bordering on weakness, the army was expected to accept this and play the role given it. But no army can operate from a position of weakness. The intrinsic base of any army must be that it is capable of fulfilling its given function—in this case defending the Netherlands—and it is not possible to begin with the idea that submissiveness is an asset. There-
fore the Dutch officers wanted all the men and the equipment
in so far as the country could provide them. And because the
civilians in office did not see the necessity of placing the
country on a war footing while still at peace, conflict
resulted.

That Snijders after four years of mobilization was
realistic enough to tell his government that a German army
could wipe out the Dutch forces in a very short time should
have been appreciated by the government, who instead tried
to label the man a defeatist. Snijders had attempted to row
with the oars he had: he had fulfilled the extra functions
such as guarding the interning camps and catching smugglers
for which the army had not been given any extra men. He had
protested against the use of excessive leaves, especially
the special or occupational leaves which to him seemed
unnecessary with so much unemployment in the country. But
the nation had given him very little support. The government
had allowed criticism to be flung at the army from all sides;
it had not instituted a modern Military Code but left the
forces with the archaic 1815 version; it had not given the
army power to act against the mobilization clubs, nor intro­
duced adequate censure; the government had, in fact, expected
the army to operate from a position of impotence while it
knew that if the country was ever attacked it had to fight
from a position of strength. The crises in March 1916 and
March 1918 had brought no deeper insight for the government,
nor for the people at large.
CHAPTER VI

October, November, 1918

1. The Riots

Near the end of the war the Netherlands experienced an upheaval which demonstrated the extent the army had deteriorated, but also showed that many Dutch people, contrary to the attitude they had displayed in the war years, were willing to fight for their country.

When in October 1918 it became obvious that the war would soon be over, the Netherlands became much more influenced by the political and social moods and discontents sweeping Europe than had been the case in previous years. "New" Imperialism, nationalism, militarism had not affected the Netherlands; that one had to fight for one's place in the sun, for one's country, for the right of small nations to exist (or whatever other slogans were used during the Great War) had not impressed many Dutchmen. But the forces of socialism, communism, anarchism, etc. had found a more fertile soil. In part this was due to the apparent success of socialism and communism—e.g. the Bolshevik Revolution—but it was also because the government had never acted very decisively against forces working to undermine the legal government.

Riots in several military camps were the catalyst that set everything in motion. These erupted as a result of the cancellation of leaves on October 23—a measure decided upon
by the government because of the large number of troops in the proximity of the southern border. In at least 20 camps riots and disturbances broke out; in some it got no further than wild talk, in others barracks were set on fire. At the largest camp in the Netherlands, Harskamp, barracks were burned, officers were shot at, and for two days and one night the soldiers were in control. When the situation was near normal again on October 27, General Snijders appointed an investigation committee composed of two generals and one colonel. He also handed out stiff sentences to the "mutineers" in the following days. The Minister of War wanted his own investigation committee and appointed one on November 1--with the ex-Minister of War, Jhr. de Jonge, as chairman. Understandably, Snijders felt himself slighted. He protested vigorously without result, considered handing in his resignation but decided to stay on.

The two reports did not differ greatly in their findings. The officers restricted themselves to the Harskamp affair while de Jonge investigated all the disturbances (the latter report was not completed until January 1919). The officers were blunt: the camp and brigade commanders were accused of indecision and weakness; "they held discussions and meetings while they should have issued orders". De Jonge's committee did not disagree with that, but found that the reasons for the unrest had been the usual ones: leaves cancelled, bad food, poor barracks, too far from home, families not receiving enough money, men held collectively
responsible for theft and damages in each barrack, officers and NCOs not providing proper leadership. The junior officers and NCOs, on the other hand, were very angry at the poor pay they received and consequently felt no urge to exert themselves. The report stressed that there was no revolutionary activity responsible for the unrests.

According to the report, the basic problem underlying everything was that "ons volk is geen militaire volk" (our people are not a military people). From this followed that military service was a heavy, joyless burden which after all these years had just become too much.

That this axiom was used as a reason, almost an excuse, to explain the riots was really a condemnation of the Dutch leadership during the Great War. The authors of the report did not realize this, and certainly did not mean it as such; nevertheless, by stating "our people are not a military people", they put their finger on something which had been known to the government in 1914 and earlier. Why had nothing been done to ameliorate this situation? Why had 200,000 men been mobilized but not paid, housed, clothed and armed properly? Since 1914 the government had had enough warning that things were not as they ought to be: the military authorities had pointed out the danger of the mobilization clubs and the criticism in the press; there had been the failure to prevent smuggling; there had been the minor riots in the camps, and the refusals to act against civilians during food riots. All these things added up to the fact
that the Dutch armed forces were unreliable and were not likely to be able to fulfill the function they had been called up for: defending the nation against foreign aggression.

The answer to the question why the government did not act has already been stated in previous chapters: a refusal to adapt to the changing situation in Europe and a stubborn insistence to continue the pre-war Dutch pattern of life. The government had worked too much for the people and not enough with the people. The "spirit of August" had shown that the Dutch were willing to sacrifice personal interest for the national one if impressed with the seriousness of the situation; they proved this again now that an internal threat appeared ready to destroy their way of life. Dutch leaders could have tapped this deeply hidden national unity to bring the people together during the Great War, rather than allow mistrust, disharmony and schisms to increase. Had this been done the "almost-revolution" of November would probably not have taken place and the sharply increased antagonism between the Left and the Right resulting from this upheaval could have been prevented.
2. The Reaction

That the riots and unrest had only been a result of mobilization fatigue was not obvious to the Dutch people who read about the Harskamp affair in their newspapers. Troelstra, and other members of the SDAP, thought the army showed a real revolutionary spirit, that the ruling classes had now lost their main support, and that it was time to act. Leaders of the SDAP, NVV (the socialist labour union), and the Bond van Dienstplichtigen met in Amsterdam on October 28, November 2 and 3. By this time the mutiny in Kiel had broken out (October 28) and was spreading to Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck, which strengthened certain Dutch socialists in their belief that the revolution in the Netherlands was only a matter of time. Others saw no such development and wanted to maintain the old party line that changes only be brought about via the legal, parliamentary method. The leaders of the Bond van Dienstplichtigen clearly stated that there was no revolutionary mood in the army, only dissatisfaction.

Unresolved difficulties within their ranks did not prevent Troelstra and other SDAP Members of Parliament from attacking the government in the Second Chamber on November 5 and demanding immediate demobilization and the removal of General Snijders as Commander in Chief. The first was refused; the latter became a fact within the next three days—if not solely because the Socialists had demanded it. Relations between the Commander in Chief and the Minister of War were strained over the de Jonge Committee; severe criticism in
the press had followed the stiff punishments given the "mutineers"; and on top of that came the SDAP demand. The following day (November 6) Geusau asked Snijders to resign because he had failed to understand the spirit of the new times; the government was planning army reforms and he was not the man to lead it because he personified the "ancien régime". Snijders resigned.

That these reforms in no way heralded a new governmental attitude towards the army will be seen shortly; the government was looking for a scapegoat and the Commander in Chief was the obvious choice because he had so often been criticised by the press and parliament. Many Dutch people believed Snijders to be too strict, too eager to use "Prussian drill tactics", and therefore unsuitable to be leading the Dutch armed forces. Dutch politicians had resented Snijders' demands for more military authority, more troops, and more explicit guidelines in case of an invasion. On the other hand, removing the Commander in Chief in this manner caused much anger, especially among the professional officers. General Terwisga, Commander Field Army, resigned in disgust. Many thought the government had handled General Snijders shabbily and had given in to left-wing pressure. The divisions within the Dutch nation were thus exacerbated a little more again.

The politicians were quick to take advantage of Snijders' departure. The moment he was gone work on all the defensive lines was stopped—the partially completed struc-
tures were still unusable in May, 1940.10

Parliament was not scheduled to meet from Friday, November 8, until Tuesday, November 12, and in those four days a great deal happened.11 On Friday a number of Roman Catholics (some were Members of Parliament) met to discuss the likelihood of a Socialist takeover. It was decided to do everything possible to prevent the Roman Catholic workers (who had their own labour union) from being swept away by socialist propaganda. A number of concerned Protestants also met that day; worried about SDAP intentions and the apparent slackness of the government, they sought contact with the local military commander in The Hague. They also sent a long memorandum to De Savorin Lohman, leader of the Christelijke Historische Unie party, voicing their fear that a small number of revolutionaries could obtain enough popular support to gain control of the government buildings and the palace (in The Hague). The group thought the police largely socialistic, the army unreliable and certainly not willing to act if even a very few soldiers chose the side of the revolutionaries. They proposed to hand-pick good soldiers, especially NCOs and officers, arm them with machine guns and have them guard the arsenals, government buildings and palace.

The government as yet did little. On Saturday Premier Ruys de Beerenbrouck met with leaders from the Vrijzinnige parties who showed no initiative and little backbone; they did not think the revolution could be stopped.12 On Sunday,
ex-Kaiser Wilhelm II appeared at the border and wanted to be admitted as a private citizen, and this fully occupied the government's attention.

That the once mighty Wilhelm II now had to ask if he could please be admitted into the Netherlands as a private person must have made an impression on the government. Late Sunday evening the Premier, the Ministers of War, Justice, and Foreign Affairs decided that partial demobilization of the armed forces must begin immediately. When the Cabinet met the next morning, one of its first decisions was to place military food supplies at the disposal of the civilian population, but as yet to keep this measure a secret.¹³

Rapid, partial demobilization in this ad hoc manner created near chaotic situations in the army. The carefully prepared demobilization plan was discarded. Each unit acted on its own as soon as it received its orders; since these were received over a span of three days (November 9, 10, 11), one unit would be busily preparing to go home while the next watched enviously and wondered why it was not allowed to go also. The confusion was compounded when some units received orders to leave for one of the three big cities (Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague) to guard against possible civilian unrest. The reports of unit commanders describing the demobilization all read the same: "everything was done abnormally hastily, little care was taken to store weapons and equipment properly, things were a mess, it was chaos," etc.¹⁴ Within a week all the 1916 and older drafts had departed (except
These men had served the longest and therefore had a right to be sent home first, but they were also the ones who had the most grievances, and had been more susceptible to left-wing propaganda. Another result of the rapid demobilization was that the less stable elements went to the big cities to celebrate their "freedom". Drunken soldiers, fights, and a few cases of stores being plundered were the result and heightened the tension in the big cities. To an uninformed observer it might well have appeared that all discipline in the army had broken down and that the men were taking things into their own hands.

3. The Left and Right

On Sunday, November 10, the SDAP leaders held another meeting to decide what to do. Opinion was still divided. K. ter Laan, the party's military expert in parliament pointed out that the many associations and clubs in the army were in no way revolutionary soldiers councils. It was decided to print a manifesto stating the SDAP demands and to hold a number of large meetings in Rotterdam on Monday night.

Rotterdam was especially chosen because the city seemed ready to hand over to the Socialists. On Saturday, H.P. Nijgh, president of the Scheepsvaart Vereeniging (ship owners association) and Mayor Zimmerman had discussions with the Socialists Heykoop and Brautigam, respectively president and secretary of the Centrale Bond van Transportarbeiders
(teamsters and dock workers union), and had virtually promised to hand over control of the city and the harbours to a new socialist government.19

On Monday morning the Manifesto hit the streets. It had fifteen demands20 of which the three most extreme ones were immediate demobilization with financial support for those not able to find employment; socialization of businesses which were suitable for this; and abolishment of the First Chamber. When the largest Rotterdam newspaper, NRC, discussed the demands in a long, front page article, it found nothing that was extreme, and thought all these demands could be fulfilled within a reasonably short time. The paper argued that most of the demands were no more than was just and needed to be implemented in the new society which would be built in Europe now that the war was over. The mayor and city council of the city met again with Socialist leaders and promised to stay on under a new government for as long as necessary. 21

Excitement mounted when in one of the five SDAP meetings in Rotterdam that evening Troelstra, flushed with the apparent successes of that day and carried away with his own rhetoric22 virtually announced the revolution—albeit not on the violent Russian model.23 The workers were promised that the next day, at one o'clock, Troelstra would announce in parliament that the revolution was a fact. The threat seemed especially serious because Butselaar, president of the Bond van Dienstplichtigen promised the meeting that the army
would support the Socialists. That Butselaar had also been carried away with the enthusiasm of the workers and had spoken against his own convictions few people knew with certainty that evening.

The "counter-revolutionary" forces had not been idle in those two days. The Protestants contacted a number of Vrijwillige Landstorm officers and the Keeper of the Palace Stables, and arranged to have 25 armed men stationed in the stables. The Catholic group had called the leaders of all Roman Catholic organizations to The Hague. They decided to print a manifesto of at least half a million copies, to have a massive open air meeting in The Hague the next Sunday, and to organize citizen guards (burgerwachten) wherever possible.

When Parliament met at one p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, it soon became clear that the Socialists' thunder had been stolen. The Premier announced that the daily bread rations would be increased from 200 (about 5 slices) to 280 grams per person, that shipments of food were on the way from England and America, but that these were addressed to the Royal Netherland Government and hence would not be delivered to another government which had obtained its power by unconstitutional means. The Minister of War announced a series of reforms for the army, as well as the partial demobilization. Troelstra spoke next, he denounced the use of force to obtain political ends but warned the government that it did not have the support of the police and army any more,
while the workers were getting impatient with the government. The next speaker, J. B. Bomans (RKSP), however, immediately challenged Troelstra's claim that he spoke for all the workers. Bomans pointed out that the Roman Catholic workers had only that very morning promised their support to the government.

By Wednesday it was clear that the threat of a revolution was past. It had never been serious to begin with. The SDAP shunned the use of force, (it did not have any weapons anyway), did not have the support of the army or the police, and did not have the right leaders. Troelstra was not the man to lead a revolution: very popular in his party and beyond, he was too much an idealist and a dreamer who had been carried away with his own dreams. Only the Communists tried something concrete on Wednesday. They organized a march to one of the barracks in Amsterdam to "liberate" the soldiers. The latter refused to be liberated, fired a few shots, and there was no more trouble. The inability of all the "revolutionary" forces to work together—the eternal sickness of the Left—and the absence of a real revolutionary leader were probably the main reasons the Socialists never even got started on their revolution.
4. The Aftermath

In the days that followed, the curious phenomenon took place that in Parliament the non-Socialist parties (including those forming the Government) discussed the 15 demands of the Socialist Manifesto, and agreed that many could and should be implemented. At the same time, feverish activity continued by the government and the "counter-revolutionary" groups to prepare the country against a takeover the shadow of which had already departed.

On Tuesday night the Cabinet discussed the military situation with the acting Commander in Chief, General Pop. It was decided to call up as many reliable troops as could be found and to guard all public buildings in the three big cities. The Vrijwillige Landstorm would also be called up the following day because the General thought only the cavalry could be trusted and perhaps a few infantry regiments, but the remainder of the army would probably not want to act for or against the government. This judgement was underlined by the largest (of the four) non-commissioned officers associations, Ons Belang (Our Interest), when it refused to sign a petition promising obedience to the government. Instead, Ons Belang sent a telegram to all its members with the simple message, "Be careful, don't burn yourself".

On Wednesday the government issued a lengthy proclamation, which was distributed all over the country. It did not sound very authoritative; but was more a desperate promising of future cornucopias if everyone would only remain
quiet and not start a revolution:

In these very difficult times the government is forced to call upon the support of all the people. The war is over but the economic life is not yet restored. Only when we apply all our strength in the coming times can we prevent a disaster. If disorder prevents the normal development, the worst must be expected. THE EXAMPLE OF RUSSIA is before us.

The order to demobilize has already been given. Care is taken that the EX-SOLDIER WILL NOT BE WITHOUT FOOD.

Military stockpiles are placed at the disposal of the people. This will enable many now without light to get COAL-OIL; 500,000 PAIR MILITARY SHOES will become available. CHEAP CLOTH will become available on a large scale....[followed three paragraphs with promises of what would become available shortly]

ALL ARRANGEMENTS WITH FOREIGN NATIONS WILL BE (PLACED) ON SHAKY GROUND IF THE LAWFUL AUTHORITY IS ATTACKED.

May the common sense of the large majority of the people, and especially of the lower classes, save us from countless miseries which will befall us if normal relations are disrupted.

People of the Netherlands, you have your own destiny in your hands.

Against the announcement of a minority that it will take the power in its own hands, the government has decided, in the interest of the rights and freedoms of the whole nation, TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER. [signed by all the (11) ministers]

The part about law and order was very short compared to all the promises, but the government spent the most time and effort on it. That Wednesday evening 400 Vrijwillige Landstorm troops were in Rotterdam (a full 24 hours before regular troops arrived), and another 600 in The Hague. 35 In these two cities the Roman Catholic and Protestant trade unions announced that they had 7,000 volunteers available for the citizen guards. Competition between the latter and the Vrijwillige Landstorm as to who would get the available weapons and who would have authority over whom had already
started. The government also issued orders for the creation of a Bijzondere (Special) Vrijwillige Landstorm. This would be an organization of ex-service men, either just demobilized or with previous service, who would be drawn up in local units, would be paid, armed, dressed, and transported to where they were needed by the government. They would be used solely for the maintenance of law and order, but would be under the control and direction of the Commander in Chief Armed Forces.

All these precautions were a little excessive. There was no danger of an armed takeover at all. But every religious organization, in fact virtually everyone except the Left, sent messages of support, manifestoes, loyalty telegrams, etc., to the capital. The Roman Catholic mass meeting drew 40,000 people on Sunday. There it was announced that the Queen would appear the following day at the Malieveld (a large, grassy field in The Hague). When she arrived, thousands and thousands were there to welcome her. Under loud cheering a company of soldiers removed the horses from in front of the Royal carriage and pulled it themselves. This "spontaneous" action later proved to have been carefully rehearsed, but that did not matter; the whole nation was suddenly super patriotic and the House of Orange better loved than at any time since William the Silent.

Considering the weak attitude of the Dutch government against foreign nations in four years of war, its flaccid position against the extreme left-wing elements within the
Netherlands desiring to undermine the army, and the lack-luster and indifferent attitude of the majority of the Dutch people, the sudden resurgence of strength, activity and determination on the part of those wanting to maintain the existing order was rather surprising. For years the country had drifted between nations at war—first it was pushed this way, then the other way. All vitality, pride, and forcefulness appeared gone. But when danger threatened, a small number of men proved alert and decisive enough to offer resistance and before long many Dutch proved willing to put national interest first. Such sentiment should have been used by the government to introduce some real army reforms, particularly now that it was riding such a crest of popularity.

It was an especially good time to begin with the younger drafts still serving because they were very busy with useful work and therefore quite satisfied. Those sent to the big cities felt their presence had possibly prevented a revolution; others had been transported to Limburg where (beginning on November 12) 70,000 German troops crossed into the Netherlands from Belgium, were disarmed and carefully watched as they made their way across Dutch territory to Germany. The interned soldiers (roughly 35,000) were eager to go home and arrangements had to be made. The same was true for the 16,000 wounded German and English prisoners of war who had been in the Netherlands since 1917.
Constructive action and modernization of the Dutch army did not take place, however. The demobilization continued. By the middle of February, 1919 the 1917 draft had gone home. By the first week in April one-third of the 1918 draft (the youngest) had also departed.\(^41\) The army was now reduced below its prewar strength. And the "modernization" which was to take place and for which General Snijders did not have the right mentality? Presumably it had already been instituted. On November 14, 1918 the plans were already worked out because the Queen (at her own request) received an outline:\(^42\)

1. Officers would receive instructions on the new officer-men relationships.
2. If a soldier was punished, he could submit his case to a committee in the composition of which he had had a vote/voice.
3. A special committee would be instituted to investigate all complaints.
4. There would be a committee to investigate all material care: housing, food, cantines, etc.
5. New guidelines would be published for the relationship between commanding officers and the various clubs and associations of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men.
6. More attention would be paid to the spiritual health of the soldiers. The law forbidding cursing and swearing would be enforced more strictly.

What all the modernization amounted to then was another three committees, more power for the clubs and associations, a slight lessening in disciplinary rules, a review of sentences, and a more (outwardly) "Christian" army which did not curse or swear.

A few of the six points had merit and needed to be done, but the program was far short of what was necessary.
Considering the deficiencies that had come to light over the years and the way discipline had broken down major reconstruction was required, not a half-hearted patch job.

The only event the government drew a lesson from was the almost-Revolution of November. The then created Bijzondere Vrijwillige Landstorm (BVL) was retained in the interwar years and placed under a separate command.\textsuperscript{43} The BVL could only be called out when law and order was threatened and was only paid when called out.\textsuperscript{44} It thus became an "insurance" force of armed civilians under military command to protect the internal security of the country; this could not be left solely to the regular army because it was not considered reliable enough. No effort was made to reconstruct the regular forces so that they would be reliable. The government also created a Central Intelligence Agency (Centrale Inlichtingendienst) which was hidden from public and parliament's view by having its budget placed under General Staff expenditures.\textsuperscript{45} Never large, the new department of 4 officers, 3 civilians, and 8 typists,\textsuperscript{46} was expected to gather information about revolutionary elements within the country. Apart from these two measures designed to guard against danger from within, no other precautions were taken. The possibility of danger from outside the borders was not considered at all.

In view of the nature of successive governments one would expect that the shortcomings in the military would be remedied. For the next 20 years the governments were always
formed by the parties from the Right—the men in favour of having an army, the men who had come to the aid of the nation in November. Unfortunately, "the Right" was anything but a homogenous body; divided along economic, geographic and religious lines, it was seldom that there was a united policy in favour of anything. They opposed, to a greater or lesser degree, the SDAP and all those left of it, and were generally in favour of a defensive force; but the size of that force, the financial obligations it should place on the nation, and the magnitude of the danger threatening the Netherlands were all questions viewed differently by the groups making up "the Right". Even during the first five years of Hitler's Chancellorship few Dutch people asked themselves whether the independence of the Netherlands was in danger. Consequently there was never any effort made to strengthen the defences of the nation; the Great War experience, which should have served as an example and a blue print for what was required for the future was ignored. What the government took precautionary measures against—a possible revolution—never came; what the government did not think necessary to guard against—a foreign invasion—did come.
CHAPTER VII
Consequences of Neglect

1. The Inter-War Years

From the experience of the Great War the Netherlands could draw one of three conclusions: 1. the country should be and could be defended provided much money and effort were expended 2. the Netherlands was too small and weak to fight against big nations and therefore there was no point in having an army at all 3. a moderate force, reasonable defences, and impartiality in politics would suffice to keep the Netherlands safe.

Looking back on the four years that rent Europe many Dutch people drew the conclusion that the Netherlands had remained out of the conflict because it had been neutral before, and continued to be scrupulously impartial during the war. In spite of the many memoirs of Dutch politicians, German generals, British statesmen and many others in positions of authority during the war—which clearly showed that the Netherlands simply had been lucky--this notion was maintained for years. Out of it the fallacious belief was born that the Netherlands, having stayed out twice now (1870, 1914) would "naturally" stay out of any future war. Joining Europe in the cry of "never again", the Netherlands threw itself wholeheartedly into the anti-war movement. The euphoria of the new peaceful Europe so obviously manifested in the demise of militaristic Germany, a Naval Agreement
(1922), the Locarno Treaties (1925), a Briand-Kellogg Pact (1928), and guaranteed by the League of Nations, really took hold in the Netherlands. But apart from joining the League of Nations in 1920, the Dutch did nothing else because neutrality still meant impartiality—also in peaceful Europe. Foreign affairs became once again something to read about in the newspapers without asking what foreign events might mean for the Netherlands.

The popular belief that the Netherlands had some sort of permanent lease on neutrality was strengthened when in 1923 a Dutch historian (A. A. Struycken) wrote that the neutrality of the Netherlands was a necessity for the political balance in Europe. Presumptuous as this sounds, the idea was accepted; as late as 1938 the former Minister of Foreign Affairs (1918-1929) Van Karnebeek used these words to defend the Dutch position of neutrality.

It was not thought necessary to ensure that the neutrality of the Netherlands (and presumably thereby the political balance in Europe) was guaranteed by adequate defences. Long, acrimonious debates in Parliament in 1921 and 1922 resulted in very severe cuts in the defence budget. From fl. 207 million in 1919 the budget was reduced to fl. 127 million in 1920 and to 92 million two years later. From that point it went steadily downwards until the low point of 74 million in 1934 and 75 million in 1935 was reached. A fund of fl. 106 million was promised to buy new weapons; the promise was never fulfilled.
For some people the reductions of 1921 and 1922 were still not enough. The Vrijzinnig-Democratische Bond wanted total disarmament because "the Netherlands could not defend itself anyway"; the SDAP considered armed defence "national suicide"; some of the religious splinter parties, e.g. the Christelijke-Democratische Unie, were also pacifistic.  

Total disarmament did not occur, but what happened was not very different. Mistakes from before and during the war were repeated as if they were the most normal and logical thing in the world. The post, Commander in Chief Armed Forces, was once again made vacant to be filled when the country needed such a man. The Chief of the General Staff was to look after the army in the meantime, but since the Commander Field Army was of the same rank (sometimes higher) and the Minister of War was usually a retired officer, much wrangling and in-fighting took place.

Not that there was much to fight about; the number of conscripts was reduced to 19,500, and their training period to five and one-half months and even this could be decreased to one and one-half months if a person took 300 hours "pre-training" with the BVL. Once again the better men took advantage of the option and the army suffered. Those who were conscripted had to serve for 15 years, but only two retraining periods for a total of 40 days (reduced to 30 days in 1928) were thought necessary. (Belgium drafted 55,000 men in 1921). The professional officers, disgusted with the state of affairs, rapidly disappeared from the army.
In 1918 there were 1050 of them; by 1936 only 625 remained. Most of the ones who remained found a haven in the several staffs or (virtually empty) staff colleges. The professional NCOs were similarly reduced in numbers; only the older ones, waiting out their time until retirement and pension remained.

The euphemism for the "reforms" of the army was that the "Swiss system" was being introduced. The twisted reasoning behind the new "system" is difficult to follow. From 1915 to 1918 there had been a Swiss system in so far as all able-bodied men served in the forces. Now only 19,500 served out of the 49,000 medically fit to do so. Consequently, in a mobilization (as happened in 1939) men in their thirties were called up while thousands in their early twenties (often unemployed) remained at home. The Dutch conveniently forgot that the Swiss spent a great deal more time, money, and effort on their defences than the Netherlands. The Swiss also had a short first training period but thereafter frequently had extensive manoeuvres which acted as "test-mobilizations" and brought men repeatedly together in large formations to get used to working with each other. Except for 40 days in 15 years the Dutch "troops" did not work with each other at all.

The argument can be forwarded that the Netherlands had no reason to spend money on defence in the decade and a half following the Great War. Europe was at peace, Germany was disarmed, there was a League of Nations, everything appeared to ensure a long period of stability. A country as little as
the Netherlands certainly did not need to exert itself
spending large sums against a phantom enemy who might never
materialize.

This argument is not acceptable if the long-range view
is taken— which must always be done in questions of national
defence. The Netherlands had had a very cheap training period
from 1914 to 1918; it had not been invaded yet had discovered
all the shortcomings of its defence capabilities. The various
deficiencies (in fortifications, weapons, discipline and
training) had been of such nature that they could not be
rectified in a short period of time. The Great War had shown
that no weapons could be procured abroad in time of extreme
international tension or war. It had also become clear that
the Netherlands would need years to develop its own armament
industry. Building defensive lines could not be started when
the enemy crossed the border— this had been true in the
Great War and with armies becoming more mobile became truer
every day. Training an efficient army took time in any
country but especially in the Netherlands where there was
really no base to build on.

That nothing happened during the twenties is perhaps
understandable. Anti-militarism was strong in the Netherlands;
there was no foreign threat. But in the early thirties the
situation changed; international tension increased (as it
had before 1914). Careful statemen should have heeded the
warning— especially in the Netherlands. From 1918 to 1940
the ten governments (under three premiers) were always made
up from the three largest religious parties (Anti-Revolutionaire Partij; Christelijke-Historische Unie; Rooms Katholieke Staats Partij). These were the men who had been in favour of a defence force since before 1914, who had voted against demobilization on a number of occasions from 1914 to 1918, who had rushed to the aid of their country in November 1918, who wanted to keep an army in 1921 when the Left had wanted to abolish it. During the twenties the Right had accepted the minimum; one would expect that in the thirties they would want more, especially since the internal political climate became more favourable for this.

There was still very little unity in the Netherlands; the 54 parties who contested the 1933 election showed the malaise in the country. But there were a growing number of people who began to desire more authority, more security and a more forceful national policy. In part this stemmed from Mussolini's "example" in Italy, in part from the 1929 depression which caused so much upheaval in so many lives. A more concrete example was the continuing existence and growth of the Bijzondere Vrijwillige Landstorm. It had between 45,000 and 60,000 members during the twenties; by 1934 this number had increased to 80,000, by 1938 to 93,000. These were the men who thought it necessary to be ready in case their country should become endangered. The BVL was not a large group in a population of roughly 8 million; but others also would have accepted a more forceful defence policy.
In February, 1933, a mutiny broke out on the old cruiser De Zeven Provincien stationed in the Dutch East Indies. When the mutineers sailed the ship along the coast of Sumatra the government sent a bomber which dropped one bomb on the ship—23 dead, 14 wounded. The mutineers handed over the ship. Before the government took this action, H. Colijn, leader of the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij, had told journalists, "if need be the ship must be torpedoed and sent to the bottom of the ocean." Strong protest from the SDAP and other left-wing parties followed Colijn's words and even more so the government's (Premier Ruys de Beerenbrouck) action. But when the elections were held two months later (April, 1933), the ARP, with Colijn as its leader, gained two seats and increased its vote from 390,000 to almost 500,000 while the SDAP lost two seats. In addition, one of the few new splinter parties which managed to get into Parliament (14 parties of the 54 did) was the Verbond van Nationaal Herstel, under the leadership of General Snijders. The main point in the election campaign of this party had been that the Netherlands needed a better defence policy.

Finally, the SDAP protested the bombing of De Zeven Provincien, but in 1937 the party voted for the first time in favour of the defence budget and also scrapped the party dictum that the Netherlands should become a republic. These two changes did not come over-night, they had been debated for years within the party. The division in the Left, and its gradual acceptance that the Netherlands should prepare
to defend itself, was an indication how the political climate was changing. The government could have, in 1934 or 1935, started to strengthen the Dutch army without encountering too much opposition in the country.

No such measures were undertaken, however. Premier Colijn (1933-1939) was as myopic as his predecessors in judging changing attitudes in foreign countries. In April 1939—after Austria and Czechoslovakia had fallen to Hitler—he said in a radio speech:

...There is no reason at all to be concerned. Of course we carefully watch the world situation, but that is very different from fearing for our immediate safety. For such fear—I repeat it—I do not see any reason.

With such political leaders, and a population apathetic towards foreign events it goes almost without saying that no defence measures were undertaken. From 1921 to 1939 the Netherlands spent only 1.7 per cent of its total national income on defence. In 1932, of some 14 European countries, the Netherlands spent the lowest percentage of its national budget on defence—8.7 per cent. Belgium spent 16.7 per cent, Denmark 16.3. In the year that Hitler came to power and Japan and Germany withdrew from the League of Nations, the Dutch government instituted the Commissie Idenburg which had to find ways of paring another 25 million guilders from the defence budget. That same year the Netherlands spent fl. 6.22 per capita for defence; Denmark spent fl. 9.70, Belgium fl. 11.47, and Switzerland fl. 13.40. In 1935, when Hitler introduced conscription and announced that Germany would
rearm, the Dutch increased their defence budget by one million (to fl. 75 million), discontinued the "pre-training" program (as a means of saving money!), and established a Defence Fund of fl. 31 million to buy new weapons (while in 1921 fl. 106 million had been thought necessary!). The 1937 defence budget of fl. 94 million returned the nation to the 1923 level of expenditures. Only in 1938, after the occupation and annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland, did the Dutch begin to act. The Defence Fund received fl. 14 million (and another fl. 39 million in 1939), the military budget was increased to fl. 152 million, the draft expanded from 19,500 to 27,500 and service time lengthened to 11 months.\(^1\)

It was all a little sad and very much too late; it was also very contradictory and hopelessly illogical. In 1936 the Netherlands declared that it did not consider itself bound by the collective security clause of the League of Nations (then to be used for the first time against Italy for its attack on Ethiopia). Thus the Netherlands returned completely to its World War I position, declared once again that it withdrew itself from developments in Europe, and would not take sides with, or against anyone. On itself this was a logical position for the Netherlands given its past history, but seen in the light of the developments in Europe since 1918, it did not make sense to adopt such a policy without having adequate forces to back it up. Hitler's moves could not be foreseen, but another war between Germany and France had to be considered a possibility. The Dutch knew
that France and Belgium had built, and were still building, extensive defensive works along their eastern borders, consequently it was logical to expect a German attack to come through the Netherlands and turn south to hit Belgium in her weakly defended northern flank. (The Dutch General Staff had pointed this out to the government.) There was no reason to maintain the myth about the Great War and the way the Netherlands had escaped it. Moltke's Erinnerungen, Briefe, Dokumente, had been in print since 1922, and clearly demonstrated that only his idea that a neutral Netherlands was worth more to Germany than an occupied one had spared the country. The next German Commander in Chief might not think the same way, and then the Netherlands would be attacked. The previous chapters have shown that the Dutch forces would not have been able to stop a determined enemy from defeating the Netherlands from 1914 to 1918. This same information must have been known to the Dutch government. There was even more reason to worry now because armies had gained the extra dimension of air power, and had greatly increased in mobility and fire power as well.

The Dutch army in 1939 (even with service time increased to two years) was much weaker than in 1914. By the end of 1939 only about 50,000 men had received a reasonable amount of training (i.e. 11 months); it would thus take several more years before the army was well trained. Since the day General Snijders was removed from command there had
been no work done on the defence installations. The Vesting Holland, already old in 1914, was in 1939 the same as in 1890. In 1937 discussions were held on the need for a new defensive line east of the Vesting Holland; it was autumn 1939 before the first spade went into the earth to dig the anti-tank canal: no unemployed civilians were allowed to work on it. Even then military projects were not to be a means of creating work for the unemployed.

What took place in the year before the German invasion of the Netherlands was a sad repetition of the 1914-1918 period. Only the names and numbers were different. Most of the money in the Defence Fund could not be spent; all foreign weapon manufacturers were working for their own governments. In May 1940 the Dutch had 4.5 pieces of (mostly old) artillery per infantry battalion (Belgium had 10.2, Switzerland even more). Some of the artillery pieces fired at the incoming Germans had been built in 1880 and 1878. The airforce consisted in 1932 of 29 officers and 10 NCOs, by the outbreak of the war it had 125 (older) planes.

The Netherlands did not possess one tank.

The mobilized soldier earned fl. 2.23 a week--32 devalued guilder cents a day.

The uniforms had been changed since 1918, but General Snijders' condemnation of the old ones was as easily applied to the new ones: "they were ill fitting, rough and uncomfortable, and detracted from a soldierly bearing". Especially irritating were the high collars of the great
coats and the puttees. The latter had been adopted from the
British, but instead of having them only around the ankles
and of soft, pliable material, the Dutch had them come to
the knee, and made them of a cheap, stiff cotton. In order
to keep them on, they had to be tied so tightly it hindered
the circulation. The Quartermaster assumed that each draftee
would have a pair of good boots and proper underwear of his
own—obviously a fallacious (and rather stupid) assumption.
When mobilization was called on August 28, 1939, not enough
uniforms were in stock; some soldiers had to train for weeks
in civilian clothes. Canteen and mess kit were made of cheap
tin with soldered seams; they could thus not be heated over
a fire because the solder would melt.

These might seem like minor matters but they were not.
An ill-fitting uniform, or having to drink cold coffee
because it can not be heated is very aggravating if it is a
daily occurrence. Such things really affect the morale of a
soldier. Especially for the Dutch army these things were
bad. By nature not inclined to soldiering, never having
experienced a war, any kind of discomfort or hardship was
reason for extensive complaining. Having been told time and
again that the Netherlands had remained out of the Great War
because of its strict neutrality, and having been assured by
the political leaders that there was nothing to worry about,
few Dutch conscripts took their military duties seriously.
They grumbled as much as their fathers had done 25 years
earlier, and this time with more justification. They built
listlessly and carelessly on their defensive lines, not expecting that they would ever have to use them—after all, their fathers had not had to use the ones they had built!24

Desire to volunteer was as limited as in 1914. The government asked in April, 1939, for volunteers from among those without work. There were over one-quarter million unemployed men in the Netherlands, yet fewer than 3,000 joined the armed forces.25

A great deal was thus the same in 1939 as in the previous war; and they were all the wrong things that were similar. No Commander in Chief was appointed until the army was mobilized; he was General Reynders who had been Chief of the General Staff since 1934. He remembered the last war, did not want to have a recurrence of the mobilization clubs and simply forbade all politics and propaganda within the army. The Minister of War (A. Q. H. Dijxhoorn, himself a former officer) thought this went too far and wanted some sort of happy medium, only forbidding the "bad" mobilization clubs (i.e. an exact recurrence of the Snijders-de Jonge altercation26). The two men could not reach an agreement. Reynders also wanted the whole nation placed in staat van beleg so that far-reaching measures could be taken the moment they were necessary. This was refused by the government and only a few areas were put under martial law with the resulting problem of spies, undesired or suspicious looking people gathering information about the Dutch forces and defences. Finally, the General wanted a great deal of
money to increase the defences of the Grebbelinie, east of the Vesting Holland. Dijxhoorn would only consent to this if it became the main defensive line, rather than a temporary one (as Reynders planned) to hold up the enemy, complete the inundations around the Vesting, and withdraw the army within it once everything was ready. Reynders refused to promise this, considered the strategy of the government unsound, and resigned on February 5, 1940.27

Because the government repeated World War I mistakes, the Netherlands was without a Commander in Chief, still had problems with spies, mobilization clubs, and strategy (not to mention all the shortages in weapons, equipment, and defence installations). In addition, now that the army was mobilized, and training on a large scale was finally possible, it was hampered because once again extensive business, agricultural, study, etc., leaves had to be provided (as well as regular leaves, of course).28

General H. G. Winkelman, retired from 1935 to 1939, then returning to active duty as Commander Air Defence Utrecht-Soesterberg, became the new Commander in Chief. The General needed seven weeks to orientate himself and then decided to defend the Grebbelinie. During all this time there had been no contact with Belgium, France, or Great Britain; no military exchange of battle or defence plans was allowed by the Dutch government. The only concession made was that the Dutch Ambassadors in London, Brussels and Paris had sealed envelopes containing the Dutch plans of
defence (and a request to France for troops). The envelopes were not to be opened and the contents imparted to the respective governments until the Netherlands was actually attacked. Neutrality, taken far enough, can sometimes become stupidity.

The Dutch government had received plenty of warning that the Netherlands would be invaded. Even though the Dutch ignored the examples of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, there were specific indications that Hitler had designs on the Lowlands. In October, 1939, a number of people were arrested for trying to smuggle Dutch police, custom officers, and army uniforms into Germany—an obvious indication that the Germans had a plan to capture Dutch border posts and bridges intact when they invaded the Netherlands. On November 9, a Dutch officer of the General Staff, accompanying two British intelligence officers, was shot near the German border by an SS squad and the four men (including a Dutch driver) were dragged into Germany. Dutch protests about the "Venlo incident" were ignored. The most pointed warnings about German intentions came from the Dutch military attaché in Berlin, Gijsbertus Jacobus Sas. He received his information from Hans Oster, head of the Zentralabteilung, Amt Ausland-Abwehr, of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (German army's central intelligence agency). Sas warned the Dutch government many times that Hitler was planning to invade the Netherlands; he also on a number of occasions stated the date it would happen. But because Hitler changed the date of the invasion frequently Sas appeared to be wrongly informed and
the Dutch government ignored his warning.\textsuperscript{30} In the first few days of May, 1940, the Dutch government received warnings from three separate sources that a German invasion was imminent.\textsuperscript{31} The recent invasion of Norway and Denmark must have made it clear to everyone that no neutral country was safe, but the warnings were not heeded. When Sas telephoned from Berlin on Thursday evening, May 9, "Tomorrow morning at dawn," he was still not believed.

The Germans came with nine and one-third divisions, two of which were airborn and were dropped inside the Vesting Holland. Outclassed materially, outwitted strategically, outweiged numerically, the Dutch forces virtually collapsed in chaos. When Rotterdam was bombed, the war which was already lost came to an end. The army capitulated—2,032 Dutch soldiers had died in five days fighting.\textsuperscript{32} A long, very long, five years of occupation lay ahead of the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{33}

Although this thesis is only concerned with the Dutch army during World War I, the interwar years had to be covered briefly because they show the logical outcome of the continuation of the unchanged 1914-1918 defence policy. The fiasco in May 1940 can be understood if the national attitude during the Great War is understood. The principal points towards defence, the military establishment in general, and the developments in foreign nations did not differ during the Great War and the twenty years that followed.
2. National Myopia

The reasons for the Dutch lackluster and half-hearted defence efforts from 1914 to 1918 are many, but although they are various, they cannot be treated as separate entities because they are all closely interrelated. Apathy and indolence certainly played a large role, but so did individualism and a strong entrepreneurial spirit—attitudes which may appear contradictory but are yet closely tied together. The lack of positive thought and actions towards defence of the nation were strongly rooted in history. Neutrality had become a matter of course; there had long been a tendency to look inward from the borders and seldom were foreign events considered in the framework of possible consequences for the Netherlands. The apathy and indolence were also due to a natural desire to focus one's attention on the family, local community, church and/or political party, so that national interest remained in the background. In addition, because of the individualistic character of the people, few liked to be told what to do—either self interest or a resistance to having the apathy shaken out of them brought opposition to military life. Only for a relatively small number was anti-militarism based on genuine pacifistic or communistic principles—the first believing all violence to be bad, the latter arguing with Lenin that it was a capitalistic war and should therefore not be fought by the workers. With such a background a situation resulted where only the most violent threat could shake the country out of its lethargy and arouse
it to a few efforts for self defence. As soon as the immediate
danger appeared to have receded, the majority sank back to
their pre-war level and only viewed the measures which had
been taken as perhaps excessive and if not that, certainly
a nuisance and burden which did not really require the
individual's wholehearted support.

The conduct of the Netherlands from 1914 to 1918 was
a continuation of the policies of the previous 100 years--
during which time neutrality and impartiality had become
sacred objectives. Before 1914 this had cost little national
effort and involved no personal sacrifices. During the war
something had to be done, but it was seldom more than the
minimum thought necessary. One excellent example: the military
forces had cost less than 10 per cent of the annual national
income in those years. The total reached two billion guilders. 34
In comparison, the Dutch lost one and one-quarter billion
guilders--two-thirds of the total defence budget for four
years--when the Bolsheviks refused to honour the Tzar's
foreign obligations. 35 When the Harskamp Investigation
Committee wrote in 1919, "our people are not a military
people", it stated an axiom which had been true in 1909 as
well as 1879, and only proved that the Netherlands had not
changed during the war. The basic problem remained: unless
danger was imminent and easily recognizable, the Dutch people
were indolent towards the question of their security and
apathetic in taking preventive measures to guarantee their
safety.
To prepare seriously for the defence of their nation the Dutch did not have to become infatuated with the military as, for instance, had been the case in Germany before 1914. There is a great difference between wanting to defend one's country and preaching war as a "purification" method that destroys the weak and strengthens the strong. Undoubtedly the Netherlands would have fought in August, 1914, had she been attacked—but how long and how well can only be a matter of speculation.

Initial Dutch action in that month appeared promising and testified to a national unity and cooperation not seen for a long time previously. The unity did not stand the test of time; once the immediate danger appeared past, national cooperation also departed. From 1914 to 1918, as well as during the late thirties, the Dutch refused to take strong, prolonged, preventive measures. Reasons for this are partly to be found in the national character: individualism, stubbornness, conservatism, preference for life in a small circle were no traits which saw immediate or long range returns from investments in things military. By simply ignoring events in other countries and only looking inward from the Dutch borders, apathetic and slightly antagonistic attitudes towards the military could, and were maintained for a long time. The national myopia was not restricted to the war period, it carried beyond; nor were only certain classes afflicted with it, the whole nation was permeated. A good example of this is a series of lectures given on
December 14 and 15, 1939, at Leiden University. The speeches were held by three well-known academicians from three Dutch universities and dealt with the values held by the Dutch people, the role the nation could play in the commonwealth of people, and the part each individual Dutchman could have in this. What the speakers said was important, but what they did not say was indicative of the shortsightedness of the Dutch nation as a whole. They mentioned that the initiative for the speeches and the suggested topics had come from the four different student organizations and that this was already a sign that the Netherlands was changing. More interest was taken in the world beyond the borders. They spoke about the diversity in the Dutch national character, as well as the ties that bound the people together. From 1914 to 1918 the Netherlands had only had one thought, "How do we stay out of it?" During that time, "neutrality was a completely passive, negative concept". But this time the neutral nations, foremost among them the Netherlands, were actively searching for ways to establish a permanent peace. In this connection Mr. Dr. J. van Waldré de Bordes repeated a sentence from Premier de Geer's radio speech on November 13, 1939:

Every neutral country is now a bright light in the darkness which has fallen over our continent. If a new dawn is ever to arise over Europe, it must come from the neutral countries.

What the professors did not mention in their speeches was the possibility that the Netherlands might not be able
to remain neutral—that the fate of Austria, Czechoslovakia, or Poland could easily befall the nation. This did not appear to occur to the speakers. They all spoke as if neutrality was a one-sided position which could only be changed by the Netherlands. Students were not warned to prepare to fight for their country because the danger was imminent. There is not one word about a possible invasion in any of the three speeches. The most ironic (and sad) part about the lectures is that the speakers clearly recognized what had been wanting in the Dutch attitude towards neutrality, without realizing that the exact same attitude still persisted in 1939. And in fact, that they themselves shared this attitude because they failed to realize that the Netherlands must first prepare itself for its own defence before it could turn to help establish peace in Europe. It is not surprising that one of the speakers quoted the aforementioned lines of Premier de Geer's speech, and did not take issue with the manner in which the Premier had begun his speech:

It has come to the attention of the government that in the past few days rumours have circulated that a great danger threatens our country, and that these rumours have caused unrest in many people. I just wanted to tell you that there is no reason for this at all...

Continuing, the Premier used the example of the First World War; many had then also been afraid that the war would involve them, but that fear had proved quite groundless. "One should view the situation as not being any different now."

42
Leaving aside for the moment the disastrous effect this had for the military leaders who were desperately trying to prepare the Dutch forces for war, it is clear that the Premier, as well as the academicians at Leiden, had not realized the close escape that the Netherlands had had in the Great War. Linking the First World War to 1939 indicates that the Premier saw no difference between the periods and circumstances. He fully expected the situation to develop as it had 25 years earlier, and the Netherlands would "naturally" remain neutral. The great majority of the Dutch thought the same as their Premier—and had done so since 1918.

Indicative of the mood of the nation was the tremendous popularity of the in 1928 published novel, Frank van Wezels Roemruchte Jaren—Notities van een Landstormman (Frank van Wezels' Glorious Years—Diary of a Landstorm Soldier). Written in a diary style, the book mercilessly ridicules the Dutch army during the last two years of its mobilization. While E. M. Remarque in All Quiet on the Western Front, (also very popular in the Netherlands) shows the stupidity and useless loss of life in war, but also portrays the comradeship in an army as something good in an institution used for evil purposes, A. M. de Jong only shows the negative side of army life. Real comradeship is only present among all those who dislike the army and do their utmost to get out of as much work as possible. Often quite humourous, the
book ridicules the army as an institution, but never is there an attempt made to look for the reason for the existence of the army. The Dutch loved the book, laughed heartily, applauded the sketches and plays taken out of the book and performed on many occasions and agreed with the writer that the army was a stupid and useless institution. In so doing, the people subconsciously turned the larger problem—Europe at war—into a domestic issue—the Dutch army—divorced the latter from the former, and so felt justified heaping derision on the Dutch defence efforts.

Unwilling, or unable, to make a distinction between a solely defensive army and one used for conquest, the Dutch lumped both together and rejected the idea that the former was essential if the latter was present in a neighbouring state. Having been free for so long, no one could imagine what toll defeat and subjugation extracted from a country. Being a satiated nation, they projected their own mentality onto others and believed themselves safe. For this national myopia the Dutch paid dearly from 1940 to 1945.

Placing men in uniform does not make them soldiers; in a democratic state an army is only as strong as the people from whom it is drawn, which explains the underlying reason for the weakness of the Dutch army. The Dutch nation was very diverse—a conglomeration of different ideals, principles, classes and interests, divided by its rivers, canals, ditches different dialects, religious beliefs and social norms. It was held together by a bond of historical development, the
House of Orange, and an everlasting fight against the sea. The Netherlands was very much like a progressive, modern family where father, mother and children each have diverse interests which each member pursues without infringing too much upon other family members' interests. Yet each person knows himself to be part of one family. The Netherlands could exist quite nicely if no large, overriding problems existed. The war was such a problem, however, and caused some sort of infringement on everybody: the one which concerned almost everyone in some way or another was the large (for the Netherlands) armed force. Each member of the family, according to his ideas or inclinations reacted differently towards this problem. But almost everyone reacted in a negative way because the person or group felt its freedoms and its exemption from responsibilities were infringed upon. The latter had for many become, without really realizing it, a cherished right to be retained except in times of extreme emergencies.

In the previous chapters it has been shown that the Dutch never solved the problem of maintaining an army for as long as danger threatened, even though superficially the illusion was created that the problem was solved. The weapons, ammunition, equipment, discipline, deployment and state of readiness all left so much to be desired that Great Britain, and especially Germany, would have had little difficulty in defeating the Netherlands. This was not just the fault of the Dutch military forces, the whole nation
was responsible. As a nation they consistently refused to put national interest first.

The population at large demonstrated their selfish attitude in a number of ways. First, the many thousands who smuggled food and other items into Belgium and Germany were aware that, especially during 1917 and 1918, every kilo that left the Netherlands made the food situation more precarious. The Netherlands as a whole was therefore made weaker and more vulnerable to foreign pressure. The smuggled quantities were not large enough to make a noticeable difference in Germany, but it was nevertheless providing sustenance to a nation which at any moment could become an enemy. All those who smuggled served only themselves, to the detriment of the collective interest. Second, the general attitude of the population towards the army, the men who had to protect them from an enemy, was one of slight derision, indifference or apathy. The soldier who went home without permission, who dropped out during a march, who bragged about the money he made smuggling, was viewed by very many as a small hero, a clever fellow who "got away with something". The Dutch people did not condemn him, did not stigmatize such action as undesirable. Third, the people seldom if ever condemned those refusing to serve, or those preaching insubordination or draft dodging. The authorities were seen as the villain, the insubordinate soldier as the poor victim of the system. Yet the army had no other reason for existence than to protect the people of the Netherlands from invasion and
occupation as had befallen Belgium.

Many parliamentarians frequently placed party interests before national ones. The constant criticism about the army, the demands for demobilization by the SDAP and Vrijzinnig-Democraten were simply a return to pre-war policy without consideration for the changed situation within Europe. That four and one-half per cent of the population was serving in the military forces was certainly not excessive, nor was the amount of money spent on defence. The criticism should have been that too little was done, rather than that too much was done. That members of the religious parties appeared to care only for the spiritual well-being of the soldiers was also bowing to party interests. There were certainly greater problems within the forces than cursing and swearing. The parliamentarians retained the "spirit of August" for no longer than the population at large.

The men who formed the government, who in 1913 had set themselves somewhat above parliament by saying that they were to carry out "the will of the people" cannot be accused of a lackluster performance regarding certain internal affairs. Almost 200 "crisis organizations" were created, most of them in relation to food and raw material rationing; the national debt increased by one and three-quarter billion guilders in five years—an astronomical figure for those years. The government had done everything possible to prevent the collapse of industry from lack of raw materials, or a disaster among certain groups of people from lack of food.
Nevertheless, in other areas the government did not act very differently from the people it led. The attitude of the powers at war was accepted as a "given", and so was pre-war traditional neutrality and impartiality. Working within this fixed framework the government had to manoeuvre as best as it could between German and British demands. This timid attitude against both these countries quite probably made things more difficult for the Netherlands than they needed to have been. Forcing the Dutch army to defend the nation against all comers would certainly have resulted in the Netherlands becoming a battleground had Britain landed troops in the Scheldt estuary. Defence against three sides made no strategic sense at all. The government could have supported the army much more; the points have already been mentioned: care for demobilized soldiers, building better barracks, modernizing the military law code, instituting a certain amount of censorship on newspapers, and helping the military authorities combat extreme and damaging anti-militaristic propaganda. Laxness in these matters was partly due to the "newness" of the situation, of not knowing what to do, but was due more to the typically Dutch lack of interest in the military as well as the fear that parliament and the people would label them militaristic. Certainly a few of the ministers held the suspicion that the army always wanted more power, and felt the civilian authorities must guard against this—one of the reasons the staat van beleg was never extended as soon and as far as the army demanded. Considering
the power such men as Ludendorff or Kitchener obtained, the fears of the Cabinet and Parliament were certainly excessive. There were no secret funds, unchecked by Parliament, with which the army could gain influence or finance secret projects. Nor is there any record that the military authorities tried to gain political influence in the country. If anything, the military leaders should have been criticised for their lackluster performance, for not fighting harder for what they knew to be necessary to build an adequate defence force.

The officers were not free from guilt for the poor condition of the army. They did labour under the torpor of the pre-war decades and the paralysis of a social climate that did not appreciate them; few of the officers managed to shake loose from this and rise above it. Once the threat of imminent war receded somewhat, and life became near normal again, many senior officers sought a nice, safe desk job and shunned training new men or spending time in the field with the troops. The professional officers (and to a lesser extent the professional NCOs), formed a sort of private club and disassociated themselves from the conscripted officers and NCOs. They became difficult to approach for the men and followed the Dutch pattern of finding a small group and neglecting the larger, national arena.

Many of the older officers, especially those who had returned from retirement to active service (Minister Bosboom was a retired officer), did not grasp the need for extensive
sport and recreation in an army doomed to a long period of idleness. More flexibility, also in relation to such things as free train travel, leave stipulations, education, evening passes, etc., would have prevented many grievances. Closer cooperation with NCO and soldier associations and clubs could have alleviated many minor irritations and created a greater understanding of the various problems.

Enough has been said about the actions of the common soldier to realize that he only did what was absolutely necessary, tried to get out of as much work as possible, smuggled, went absent without a pass, and complained and grumbled incessantly. Not everyone was like this, but so many had one or two weak points that the rot affected virtually every unit. The army, as the nation that produced it, did as little as possible and put private interest ahead of the national whenever given the chance.

A final, and perhaps the best, example of placing individual, class, religious, or group interest above the national one was the 1918 election. Held at a time when there was no sign of a German collapse (voting day was June 3), on the heels of the most serious crisis the Netherlands had gone through during the war, the nation erupted in a splintering of interests. Seventeen parties gained at least one seat in Parliament, even more contested the election. As with the professors at Leiden, what was NOT said during the election was symptomatic of the Dutch mentality; not one party based its campaign on the need for a firmer foreign
policy, stronger defence measures, or more forceful action against those working to undermine the discipline within the armed forces. Every party or group talked about certain particular interests; what should have been the overriding national concern was barely mentioned. The groups contesting the election simply accepted the position of the Netherlands as a given, paid no further attention to it, and concentrated on internal matters. The large parties were no different; two months of political wrangling before a new Cabinet could be formed hardly testifies to a unity of purpose.

Four years of bitter war in Europe did not change the Dutch mentality. Rather than realize the frailty of their peaceful existence, they became all the more convinced that they were destined to remain outside any war as long as they desired to remain out of it. With such a mentality it became natural to pay only lip service to the problems of national defence, something which was made all the easier by the apathetic and indolent nature of the Dutch insofar as national interest was concerned.
3. Summation

Since 1945 much soul-searching has taken place in the Netherlands to find the causes for the quick and total defeat in May 1940. Many publications, of which the most recent, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, is no exception, still search for the elusive answer. World War I has received very little attention since 1945, except where it concerns the November Revolution; the inter-war years, on the other hand, have been thoroughly covered, and each writer finds a different cause: the depression, unwillingness to recognize the danger of fascism, anti-militarism, or old, conservative leaders.

The above no doubt were significant in the immediate roles they played, but they were only influences superimposed on a national character which had developed through many years. To understand the fundamental makeup of this national character is to grasp the most basic reasons for the disaster of May 1940. World War I is important because the Netherlands apparently manoeuvred successfully through this period and this served to consolidate the fatal attitudes towards defence into a complacent whole.

The roots of the May 1940 collapse go back to the years before 1900. In this period must be sought the explanations for the national divisive as well as cohesive forces, the religious diversities, and the myopia. The stress and tension of the Great War might have accentuated the unifying forces. The probability of being drafted, and once drafted, the
soldier's life that had to be led was one thing all male citizens had in common. But a study of the four years of the First World War shows that the diverse characteristics, idiosyncrasies and social norms prevalent before 1914 had not changed appreciably by 1918.

The confidence in a history of neutrality, the lack-adaisical attitude toward foreign events, a minimum of effort and money spent on a military force had been sufficient to come through World War I unscathed. There was thus nothing to motivate a change, and the Netherlands lived through the inter-war years essentially ignoring the fact that the political situations all about them were changing, and required an adjustment in foreign policy and defence measures.

For the Netherlands the Great War could and should have been the time to draw together, to realize that the national unity should take priority over the national differences. When this did not happen, one can only conclude that the Dutch had lost much of their earlier (16th and 17th century) greatness. They could not rise to meet the challenge and prepare themselves to defend their country and their freedom. Even the moderate sacrifices for their own defence were often too much. That an army, drawn from such a nation, was little more than a facade is obvious. The Dutch refused to see it, but May 1940 proved it.
Stelling Holland
1. Fortress Den Helder
2. Stelling Amsterdam
3. Waterlinie
4. Meuse and Scheldt estuary defences
5. Zeeland defences

--- fortified lines and forts

--- inundated areas
The Waterlinie Defences
Stelling Amsterdam

Showing its 42 Fortifications and Strong Points
REFERENCES CHAPTER I


3 I. J. Brugmans, Paardenkracht, p. 353.

4 Ibid., p. 385.

5 In accordance with Dutch use, the term "the Netherlands" is used to describe the whole nation, while "Holland" denotes the provinces of Zuid and Noord Holland and the low-lying western areas of Noord Brabant.

6 See p. 31.

7 I. J. Brugmans, Paardenkracht, p. 386.

8 Ibid., pp. 313, 345.

9 Ibid., p. 366.

10 Winkler Prins Encyclopedia, XIV (Amsterdam, 1952), p. 306.

11 N. Bosboom, In Moeilijke Omstandigheden (Gorinchem, 1933), p. 373. The author gives 85 cents a day as average for field workers.

The information in the two paragraphs is partly based on information received in personal conversations with Mevr. J. Blaauw, Mej. M. Muilwijk, Mr. V. Vleming, and others.


13 I. J. Brugmans, Paardenkracht, p. 414.

14 Hajo Brugmans, Geschiedenis van Nederland onder de Regering van Koningin Wilhelmina (Amsterdam, 1938), p. 35.


A. S. de Leeuw, Nederland in de Wereldpolitiek van 1900 tot heden (Zeist, 1936), pp. 7-9.
15 C. K. Elout, Figuren en Momenten uit de Politiek van Koningin Wilhelmina's tijd (Amsterdam, 1938), pp. 61-63.


17 For more information see P. J. Oud, Honderd Jaren 1840-1940 (Assen, 1946), p. 199.

18 Ibid., pp. 236-237.

19 J. A. van Hamel, Nederland tussen de Mogendheden (Amsterdam, 1918), p. 393.


22 Ibid., p. 63.


25 Ibid., p. 721.

26 Smit, Hoogtij, p. 98.

27 Welderen, Schets, Deel III, p. 223.

28 The term "anti-militarism", throughout this thesis is taken to mean the opposition to a military spirit, the ideals and attitudes of professional soldiers, and the glorification of such a spirit or ideals present in a nation as a whole, a government, or a military caste in a government. In addition, it means the opposition to the policy of maintaining a strong armed force and being ready and willing to use them: i.e. aggressive preparedness.


31 For more information see ibid., pp. 139-142.

32 See ibid., p. 206.
Smit, Eerste Wereldoorlog. Het Voorspel, pp. 142-143.

All future references to documents published in the Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatien will be indicated by the accepted Dutch abbreviation,"RGP", followed by the series number and thereafter the document number. For the periods covered by the RGP see bibliography under "Published Sources".

34 Ibid., No. 494.

35 Ibid., No. 496.

36 Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 40.


Welder en, Schets, Deel III, p. 223.


41 For instance, prior to World War I in the Hague 16 out of 100 infants of families paying the lowest rent died, while in families paying the highest rent only 3 out of 100 died.

The eighteenth century schutters guilds were created to ensure the safety in the cities. They consisted of men belonging to (trade) guilds, but given permission to carry weapons when on guard duty. The nineteenth century schutterijen were more or less "rifle associations", or "gun clubs", but with this difference that they were expected as clubs to either join the army when danger threatened or to defend their locality against an invader.


RGP 128, No. 397.

RGP 128, No. 167 subsection 61.
Dutch historians held views similar to the foreign observers. See e.g. H. T. Colenbrander, "De Internationale Positie," Nederland in den Oorlogstijd, ed. Hajo Brugmans, p. 103.
REFERENCES CHAPTER II


4 RGP 109, No. 26. See notes underneath the publication; the Declaration of Neutrality was issued 16 times in all, the last time on August 1, 1918, when Costa Rica declared war on Germany.

5 D. van der Berg, Snijders, pp. 69-71.

6 A. S. de Leeuw, Nederland in de Wereldpolitiek, Ch. 2. H. von Moltke, Erinnerungen, Briefe, Dokumente (Stuttgart, 1922), pp. 16-17, 429-431.


8 For a complete breakdown of the field army see Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 38.

9 G. A. A. Alting von Geusau, Onze Weermacht te Land (Amsterdam, no date), pp. 4-28.

10 Alting von Geusau, Onze Weermacht te Land, pp. 27-36.

11 Snijders, op. cit., p. 541.


16 N. Japikse, Die Stellung Hollands im Weltkrieg (Gotha, 1921), p. 41n.

17 Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 32.

18 Ibid., pp. 33.

19 Ibid., pp. 105-144.

20 Ibid., p. 30.


22 Ibid., pp. 30-31.

23 Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 51.

24 Cited in ibid., p. 50.

25 RGP 109, Nos. 18,19. Gevers to Louden, August 2.

26 RGP 109, No. 22.

27 RGP 109, No. 24, see note p. 12.

28 RGP 109, p. 17n. See also Smit, Hoogtij, p. 122.

29 RGP 109, Nos. 12,33. Cort van der Linden to Snijders.

30 RGP 109, No. 40.

31 Cited in Welderen, Schets, Deel III, p. 20.

32 All the governmental activity cannot be traced here. See Welderen, Schets, Deel IV, Ch. I.

M. W. F. Treub, Herinneringen en Overpeinzingen (Haarlem, 1931), ch. 4.

For the financial difficulties see:

-----Oorlogstijd. Herrinneringen en Indrukken (Amsterdam, 1917), chs. 4,5,6.


33 Welderen, Schets, Deel IV, pp. 38-40.

34 Oud, Honderd Jaren, p. 240.
For instance, see Louden's explanations for the amounts exported during August. Louden to Marees van Swinderen, September 19, 1914. RGP 109, No. 148.


Ibid., pp. 150-151.

E. van Raalte, "Treub's houding gedurende Wereldoorlog Nr. I," Vrij Nederland, 6-12-1958.

Information in the following paragraph from the Notulen van de Ministerraad van 3 October, 1914. In RGP 109, No. 171, pp. 145-159. The original document seen by me.

Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 151.


RGP 109, No. 17.

See RGP 109, note 1 and 2, p. 8. Because the Dutch military did not obtain the same extensive powers as our armed forces do when martial law is declared, the Dutch term staat van beleg will be used rather than the inaccurate translation "martial law".

Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 303.


D. van der Berg, Snijders, p. 108.


Ibid., pp. 330-331.

The two Peace Conferences had discussed interning and the agreed upon Regulations had been signed by the Netherlands on July 1, 1909. The most important articles were: 

Art. 11 The impartial Power who allows troops to enter her territory belonging to the armies of the nations at war, is to intern them as far from the war scene as possible. She can guard them in camps or even imprison them in fortresses or suitable places. She decides whether the officers can be allowed free on their word of honour that they will not leave the territory of the impartial Power without prior permission.

Art. 12 In the absence of any special arrangement the impartial Power provides the internees with food, clothing and the necessary help...

At the end of hostilities the costs of interning will be reimbursed.

Some of the articles seem quite harmless, others are definitely slanted in favour of one side or another. Almost all the articles are concerned with foreign news (German bestialities in Belgium, Britain choking off Dutch trade, etc.), but already a few small articles deal with the complaints of the Dutch soldiers.
Ten years earlier a law had been passed, January 11, 1904, Staatsblad No. 7, that all telephone and telegraph messages could be checked by the military when the country was in danger.

Information compiled from Archief Ministerraad, 147B, Part I, folders marked "October, November".


Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, pp. 245-246.

Ibid., Bosboom, p. 252.

Ibid., p. 370.

Ibid., Bosboom, p. 252.


Soldatencourant, October 4, 1914. All issues are in Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Kanaalweg 2, The Hague.

Ibid., October 2, 1914.

Ibid., October 4, 1914.

Factual information from Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, pp. 371-372.

Soldatencourant, September 6, 9, 1914.
REFERENCES CHAPTER III


2 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 180, Dossier 5124, 1915, D1870. For instance, on March 5, 1915, a new list came out and to "leather" was added, "and all articles made thereof". Such a minor change on paper added a large number of items to the list which the customs officers now had to watch for.

3 Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 12.


5 Many documents deal with this problem. The headings of a few of them speak for themselves. Archief Veldleger, Omslag 159, Dossier 5711, "Smokkelarij; vervanging van personeel van de landweer." Omslag 170, Dossier 22934, "Vervanging 1 Company reserve van C battalion." Omslag 171, Dossier 24456, "Onbetrouwbare elementen bij grenstroepen." Omslag 159, Dossier 5394, "Onbetrouwbare landweer in Goesbeek."

6 See pp. 45-46.


10 Archief Generale Staff, Omslag 486, stuk CCLXVIII, Dossier I.

11 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 180, Dossier 5124, D2151a, March 29, 1915.
To give another indication how the war affected Dutch trade, in 1913, 10,203 ships entered the harbours of Rotterdam, in 1917 only 1,374 ships entered this port, in 1918 only 1,048. See ibid., p. 223.

L. de Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel I, p. 42.

C. K. Elout, "De Nederlandse Oorlogspsyche," Nederland in den Oorlogstijd, ed. Hajo Brugmans, p. 366. The information in the paragraph comes largely from this article.

Ibid., pp. 365-366.

M. W. F. Treub, "De Economische toestand van Nederland," in ibid., pp. 184-187. This amount was in addition to the regular expenditures; the 1913 budget was fl. 240 million.

L. de Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel I, p. 43.

Archief Veldleger, Omslag 232, Dossier 46686, 48748.

Ibid., 49252.

Archief Generale Staff, Omslag 486, Stuk CCLXVIII, 8026GS.


Ibid., D48245. Xerox copy in my possession.

See Archief Buitenlandse Zaken, A250d, Nos. 53803, 46587, 43793, 30647.

32 Archief Buitenlandse Zaken, A250d, 44080.
33 Loc. cit.
34 Ibid., 46447.
35 Archief Generale Staff, Omslag 486, Stuk CCLXVIII, Dossier 2, 1917.
36 Ibid., 6349GS.
37 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 171, Dossier 24456.
38 Information from H. J. Scheffer, November 1918: Journaal van een Revolutie die niet doorging, (Amsterdam, 1968), Bijlage, pp. 293-296.
39 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 172, Dossier 6040, "Censure 1915/16."
40 Loc. cit.
41 Ibid., Omslag 173, Dossier 16406, "Censure 1915/17."
42 See Ibid., Omslag 172, Dossier 13516, for examples.
43 See p. 55.
44 Archief Ministerraad, 147B, Dossier Opperbevelhebber, Deel I, 1915, February 15, 23.
45 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 222, Dossier 47612, G307, 1917.
46 Ibid., G284.
47 Archief Ministerraad, 147B, Dossier Opperbevelhebber, Deel II, 1915.
48 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 172, Dossier 16380, M70, "Censure 1915/18".
49 Archief Generale Staff, Pak GGLXXI, 1917.
50 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 279, Dossier 5647.
51 Ibid., Omslag 293, Dossier 26786, H3412.
REFERENCES CHAPTER IV

1 Cited in de Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel I, p. 39.


4 Barnouw, Holland under Queen Wilhelmina, pp. 58-59.

5 Archief Generale Staff, Omslag 341, Pak CLXXXII, Bundel 2, 2950GS.

6 Ibid., 4297GS IV.

7 Ibid., 4363GS IV.

8 Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, pp. 226-227.

9 Ibid., p. 228.

10 Ibid., p. 232.


13 D. van der Berg, Snijders, pp. 85-86.


15 NRC, November 9, 1914. Found in Archief Generale Staff, Omslag 341, Pak CLXXXII, Bundel 2, 7138GS.


17 Bosboom, Bijlage G, pp. 412-413.

18 Ibid., Bijlage H, pp. 414-415.

19 Ibid., pp. 261-263.

20 Snijders' letter of May 19, 1915. See note 16 above.

21 Bosboom, p. 247.
23 Welderen, Schets, Deel IV, pp. 80-84.
24 These were the men who were to have gone home on August 1, 1914. The rotation began in the summer of 1916.
25 Snijders, op. cit., p. 549.
26 Ibid., pp. 550-551.
27 Welderen, Schets, Deel IV, pp. 65, 66, 73.
28 Throughout his book Bosboom complains about this.
29 Couranten-Catalogus 1916. In my possession.
30 Archief Generale Staff, Omslag 341, Pak CLXXXII, Bundel 2, 5428GS.
31 Bosboom, Moeilijke Omstandigheden, p. 183.
32 Ibid., p. 183.
33 Fabius, Volk en Weermacht, pp. 20-21.
37 Welderen, Schets, Deel IV, p. 61n4.
38 Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, Deel IV, Ch. I, IV.
41 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 263, Dossier 1354, 1914.
42 B. de Ligt, Opruiers? Het dienstweigerings-manifest voor de rechtbank te Utrecht verdedigd (Amsterdam, 1916).
44 Archief Ministerraad, Dossier Opperbevelhebber, 147B, September, 1915.

Archief Veldleger, Omslag 348, Dossier I.

Archief Ministerraad, 147B, 1915.

Ibid., correspondence of March 30, 31, 1915.

Archief Veldleger, Omslag 280, Dossier 8452, 1915.

Ibid., Omslag 348, Dossier I. The extent and diversity of the anti-militaristic propaganda is obvious from the list:

Socialistische Liederenbundel
De Soldaten-Tribune
De Stem der Jongeren
De Soldatenalmanak
De Verboden Vrucht
De Vrije Socialist
Het Anker
Recht door Zee
Naar de Vrijheid
De Arbeider
De Propagandist
De Tribune


Archief Veldleger, Omslag 280, Dossier 8452.

Ibid., Omslag 263, Dossier 1354, 1914.


Schepel, op. cit.


Archief Veldleger, Omslag 282, Dossier 14714. Xerox copy in my possession.

Ibid., Omslag 297, Dossier 2770.

Loc. cit.

Ibid., Omslag 297, Dossier III, 1917.

Ibid., Omslag 280, Dossier 8452, "Anti-militaire propaganda, 1915."


65 I have examined these publications in Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Kanaal Weg 2, The Hague. They are filed there under Archief 131.

66 Archief Ministerraad, Bijlagen tot de notulen 1913-1915, Nr. 146.

REFERENCES CHAPTER V

1  RGP 109, No. 321. Original seen by me.

2  Snijders probably alluded to something similar as the example put forward by the Minister of Marine during the October, 1914, Antwerp controversy, see pp. 42-44.

3  RGP 109, No. 322.

4  The north of the Netherlands was almost impossible to invade because of treacherous currents, irregular tides, sand banks, and deep "cuts" in the shallow sea bottom.

5  RGP 109, Nos. 360, 372.

6  A. von Tirpitz, Politische Dokumente, Band II (Hamburg and Berlin, 1926), p. 332.

7  Telegram in ibid., pp. 344-345.

8  RGP 109, No. 420.


11  RGP 109, No. 522.


13  RGP 109, No. 525.


15  RGP 116, No. 45.

16  F. von Bernhardi, Germany and the Next War, trans. Allen R. Powles (New York, 1914), pp. 147, 151. This book, written in 1912 became very popular in Germany; it went through three editions in four years.

The warnings were received on December 30, 1916, and January 5, 1917. RGP 109, Nos. 717, 725.

Strange as it may seem, the German troops were there to protect against a Dutch attack. In August 1916, Kuehlman, then Ambassador to the Netherlands, had warned that an attack from the Netherlands and Denmark could be expected if unrestricted submarine warfare was started, see G. A. von Mueller, The Kaiser and His Court, pp. 140, 207. No troops could be spared in August so the date was delayed; precautions were taken in January, 1917, in case Kuehlman had been correct, see Ludendorff, My War Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 243, 314, Vol. II, p. 404, and Tirpitz, Erinnerungen, p. 375.

The telegram is part of Snijders' letter to the Premier on February 20, 1917. RGP 116, No. 23.


There is a wealth of information about the sand and gravel problem. See the index (Register van Zaken) in RGP 109 and RGP 117. The latter contains the index for RGP 116.

RGP 116, No. 429.

Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, Deel IV, p. 87.

De Leeuw, Nederland in de Wereldpolitiek, p. 178.

F. Rosen, Aus Einem Diplomatischen Wanderleben, Band III (Wiesbaden, 1959), Ch. 4.

Ibid., pp. 154-155.

Ibid., pp. 158-162.

Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, Deel IV, pp. 88-91.

Note German Ambassador, April 9, 15, 1918, in RGP 116, Nos. 440, 442. Letters Colijn to Lohman, April 17; Colijn to Louden, April 19, in RGP 116, Nos. 445, 447.

RGP 116, Nos. 457, 459.

RGP 116, No. 453.

Archief Ministerraad, 147A, Geheime Bijlage, April 22, 1918.

Minutes are in RGP 116, No. 463, pp. 474-482.

Notes from the British and French Ambassadors, April 29, and Louden's discussion with them in RGP 116, Nos. 473, 477.

Archief Ministerraad, 147A, Geheime Bijlage, April 26, 1918.

Ibid., April 27-May 28, 1918.

Memorandum in RGP 116, No. 499.


Correspondence between the Cabinet and the Queen in ibid., May 14-17, 1918.

De Jonge's note to the Cabinet, June 8, in RGP 116, No. 531.

RGP 116, No. 523, see note 'a' on pp. 544-545.
Muller-Masses appears to have been a very capable officer. In a number of campaign studies of both the Eastern and Western fronts he gives a clear analysis of German strengths and weaknesses in officer-men relations, equipment, and weapons. He knew the German army well. His papers are in Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis, Kanaalweg 2, The Hague, and are filed under Handschrift 189, 141/2, 142/1.


Archief Ministerraad, 147A, Geheime Bijlage, June 14, 1918.

Ibid., July 11, 1918.

See Oud, Het Jongste Verleden, Deel I, Chapters I, II, for election and cabinet information. Two months to form a new government was not unusual in the Netherlands; in 1925 it took 113 days before a government could be formed. The record (up to now) is 117 days, set in 1956.

REFERENCES CHAPTER VI

1 See, Commissie tot onderzoek naar de ontevredenheid in het leger ("s-Gravenhage, 1919).


4 Commissie tot onderzoek, pp. 13, 22-25.

5 Ibid., p. 14.

6 Scheffer, November 1918, p. 20.


10 Wilson, Vijf oorlogsdagen, p. 18.


12 Scheffer, November 1918, p. 59.

13 Archief Ministerraad, Bijlagen tot de notulen, November 11, 1918.

14 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 312, Dossier 88689 "Verslag Demobilizatie 1918."


16 Archief Veldleger, Omslag 348, Dossier IX, 6559GS "Soldatenraden."

17 Van der Does, Als't Moet, p. 100.
18 Scheffer, November 1918, p. 74.
20 Manifesto is in Oud, Jongste Verleden, Deel I, p. 84.
21 Scheffer, November 1918, pp. 90-91.
22 By his own admission, see Gedenkschriften, Deel IV, p. 206.
23 As reported in Het Volk, November 12, 1918, cited in van der Does, Als't Moet, p. 289.
24 Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, Deel IV, pp. 208-209.
25 See pp. 35-36; they had been improved since 1914, now numbered about 6,000, had uniforms and weapons; see also van der Does, Als't Moet, p. 62.
26 Scheffer, November 1918, pp. 106-109.
27 See RGP 117, No. 789. This had been a clever, last minute move by Colijn, leader of the ARP, who was in London at this time. Normally shipments were simply addressed to "the Government of the Netherlands."
28 Troelstra, Gedenkschriften, Deel IV, pp. 210-211.
29 See Oud, Jongste Verleden, Deel I, pp. 91-93.
30 Van der Does, Als't Moet, pp. 96-97.
32 Minutes from the Cabinet meeting cited in Scheffer, November 1918, pp. 117-119.
33 Cited in van der Does, Als't Moet, p. 100.
34 Copy of the Manifesto is in Archief Ministerraad, Bijlagen tot de notulen 1916-1918, Nr. 147. Capitalized words were printed in heavy, black letters in the original. The Manifesto measured about 2x3 feet.
35 Van der Does, Als't Moet, p. 103.
36 Scheffer, November 1918, pp. 146, 163.
38 Scheffer, November 1918, pp. 223-224.
These men had been wounded in such ways that they would never fight again, and had all been in prisoner of war camps for 18 months or longer. They came to the Netherlands after long discussions with the respective governments; their number was limited to 16,000 because of the food shortage in the Netherlands. See C. van Tuinen, "Handhaving van neutraliteit en gezag," Nederland in Oorlogstijd, ed. Hajo Brugmans, pp. 81-82.

41 Munnekrede, "Mobilizatie van de Landmacht," in ibid., p. 45.

42 Archief Ministerraad, Bijlagen tot de notulen 1916-1918, Nr. 147, November 14, 1918.

43 For the complete story read van der Does, Als't Moet.

44 Ibid., pp. 193-194.

45 See pp. 83-84.

46 De Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel I, pp. 55-57.
REFERENCES CHAPTER VII

1 The words van Karnebeek referred to came from A. A. H. Struycken, *De Hoofdtrekken van Nederlands Beleid* (Arnhem, 1923).

"De historie als politiek maxime van de allereerste orde heeft voortgebracht en bevestigd dat de ongereptheid en onafhankelijkheid van ons grondgebied onmisbare voorwaarde is voor het politiek evenwicht in Europa."
(History as political maxim of the first order has introduced and affirmed that the integrity and independence of our country is essential for the political balance in Europe.) Cited in J. J. van Bolhuis, *et al*., eds., *Onderdrukking en Verzet. Nederland in Oorlogstijd*, Deel I (Amsterdam, no date), p. 31.

2 The sign for guilder is fl. (from the old name for the guilder--florin).

3 De Jong, *Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel I, p. 64.

4 For the viewpoints of the parties, and the debates in parliament, see Oud, *Jongste Verleden*, Deel II, pp. 175, 213; Deel IV, pp. 102, 105, 110, 282-293.


7 See pp. 18-20 for the way the "Swiss system" was supposed to work.

8 Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

9 Ruys de Beerenbrouck (RKSP) was Premier from 1918-1925; 1929-1933: Colijn (ARP) from 1925-1926; 1933-1939: de Geer (CHU) from 1926-1929; 1939-1940. In the last Cabinet of de Geer were two SDAP ministers; the party had consented to join the government in 1937.

10 Van der Does, *Als't Moet*, Bijlage XVII.

11 These numbers do not include the men taking "pre-training" prior to going into the regular army. No one in the BVL was a member of a fascist organization, this was forbidden in 1933, see *ibid.*, p. 250. Many members of the BVL were from Calvinistic or Roman Catholic background. In deference to those who refused to work on the Lords Day, no parades, exercises, etc., were held on Sunday, see *ibid.*, p. 279.
12 For the full story of the mutiny see J. C. Mollema, Rondom de Muiterij op "De Zeven Provincien", (Deventer, 1934). Casualty figures, p. 199.


14 Ibid., pp. 193-194.

15 Cited in ibid., p. 630. Seven months later, after the fall of Poland, Premier de Geer gave an equally reassuring speech (see pp. 186-187). The speeches give a good idea of the political insight of the Dutch Premiers.

16 Information from ibid., pp. 597-598.

17 Ibid., p. 47.

18 The Dutch did not even have to go to foreign publications. The brother of General Snijders was co-author of a book about the invasion of Belgium which showed how narrowly the Netherlands escaped. A similar study was written by J. J. G. van Voorst tot Voorst, "De Manoeuvre om Limburg," published in the Militaire Spectator as well as in pamphlet form.

19 Information from ibid., pp. 31-35.

20 De Jong, ibid., Deel II, p. 385.

21 Information from ibid., pp. 31-35.

22 Information from ibid., pp. 66-69.

23 See p. 98.

24 Generale Staff, "Beknopt overzicht van de Krijgsverrichtingen der Koninklijke Landmacht," cited in Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 68.


26 See pp. 141-145.

27 Enquetecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940-1945 ('s-Gravenhage, 1949). Deel I, "Algemene Inleiding/Militair Beleid 1939/1940," deals with the differences between Reynders and Dijxhoorn in detail; Deel I are the minutes of the hearings.

28 Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, p. 67.
Much has been written about the warnings received by the Dutch. See for instance, Harold Deutch, "The Conspiracy against Hitler", The Twilight War (Minneapolis, 1960).


Especially in the Netherlands there is a great deal written about this subject. The most comprehensive, and extremely well documented publication is de Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel II, Neutraal.

For the clothing caper and the German plans see pp. 73-77; the Venlo-incident, pp. 80-115; for the warnings communicated to Sas by Oster see pp. 116-120, 272-274, 464-466, etc.

Ibid., p. 136. The attack date for Fall Gelb was set 19 times by Hitler and changed 18 times.

See ibid., pp. 438-442.

There are many books in the Netherlands about the five fatal days in May; the best are probably Wilson, Vijf Oorlogsdagen, and de Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel III, Mei '40.

The best sources for the five year occupation are in Dutch. One good book in English dealing with this period is Werner Warmbrunn, The Dutch under German Occupation 1940-1945 (Stanford, 1963).

The cost of the occupation in lives lost, property destroyed, and misery suffered can never be fully documented. Official Dutch estimates (cited by Warmbrunn on pp. 60, 68, 77, 78) prepared in 1960 state that between 300,000 and 400,000 Dutchmen were forced to work in Germany of whom 5,000 died. Between 2,000 and 3,000 persons were executed in the Netherlands and 600 died in concentration camps. Approximately 20,000 perished in prison and concentration camps in Germany. In addition, between 104,000 and 105,000 Dutch Jews were exterminated, most of them after deportation to the East.

The total cost of the occupation, including fl. 3,600,000,000 worth of goods taken to Germany, has been estimated between fl. 11,400,000,000 and fl. 15,000,000,000 (in 1938 value guilders).

No definite figures are available. For a discussion of the problem and sources see, de Jong, op. cit. Deel I, p. 58.


See pp. 8-11.
Nederland in Oorlogstijd, "Redevoeringen gehouden te Leiden op December 14 en 15 door Prof. Dr. F. Muller, Prof. Mr. A. C. Josephus Jitta, Mr. Dr. van Waldre de Bordes, Mr. J. Linthorst Horman," (Leiden, 1940).

Ibid., p. viii.

Ibid., p. 29.

Ibid., pp. 37-41, 46-47.

Cited in ibid., p. 36.


See p. 12.

De Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel I, p. 58.

For the economic difficulties, see the bibliography for the books by Brugmans, Welderen, and Treub.

The two most recent books are Scheffer, November 1918, van der Does, Als't Moet. Only C. Smit has written about the 1914-1918 period recently, Hoogtij der Nederlandse Politiek. De Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland 1899-1919, and this is very heavily based on the documents in the RGP series which he edited. Of his proposed three volumes Nederland in de Eerste Wereldoorlog (1899-1919), only the first volume is completed and deals with the pre-war years. Unfortunately, it is very much like his Hoogtij, and adds little new information or insight.


H. van Galen Last, Nederland voor de Storm. Politiek en Literature in de jaren dertig (Bussem, 1969).

De Jong, Tweede Wereldoorlog, 3 Delen. It is not fair to judge on these three volumes; they are only the start of the 10 or 12 volumes which will complete this (official, government sponsored) work. De Jong does mention in the preface of the first volume that he will come back to certain topics, i.e. treat them out of their chronological order. So far, however, he has not indicated that he sees Dutch measures during World War I as a manifestation of the weaknesses in the national character which, not being changed by that war, made the fiasco of May 1940 a logical culmination.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished Sources:

Algemeen Rijksarchief. Bleyenburg 7, Den Haag:
Archief Ministerraad 1914-1918, bijlagen tot de notulen 1913-1918. (146,147)
Geheim Dossier Snijders-de Jonge. (147A)
Correspondentie met Opperbevelhebber. (147B)
Collectie Bosboom.

Algemeen Rijksarchief, Hulpdepot Schaarsbergen.
Koningsweg 13C, Schaarsbergen:
Archief Generale Staff Koninklijke Land en Zeemacht 1813-1918 (1939).
Archief Hoofdkwartier Veldleger 1907-1942.

Archief Buitenlandze Zaken, Hoofskade 1, Den Haag:
Legatie archief Duitsland. (A250d)
Dossiers O^VI, O^VII, O^X.

Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis en Ceremonieel van het Hoofdkwartier der Koninklijke Landmacht. Kanaalweg 2, Den Haag:
Dossiers Geheime Dienst (leger).
Dossier Muller Massis. (141/2, 142/1, Handschrift 189)

Published Sources:


Memoirs, Diaries, Speeches, etc.:
Nederland in Oorlogstijd. "Redevoeringen gehouden te Leiden op December 14 en 15 door Prof. Dr. F. Muller, Prof. Mr. A. C. Josephus Jitta, Mr. Dr. van Waldré de Bordes, Mr. J. Linthorst Horman." Leiden: Sterefort Kroes, 1940.
Treub, M. W. F. Herinneringen en Overpeinzingen. 
Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1931.

Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1917.

Troelstra, P. J. Gedenkschriften. 4 Vols. Amsterdam: 
E. M. Querido, 1931-1935.

Secondary Sources:

Barnouw, A. J. Holland under Queen Wilhelmina. 

Beaufort, J. A. A. de. Fijftig Jaren uit onze Geschiedenis 

Beishuizen, J. and E. Werkman. De Magere Jaren. Nederland 

Bell, A. C. The Blockade of the Central Empires 1914-1918. 


Bernhardi, Friedrich von. Germany and the Next War. 

Bolhuis, J. J. van. et al., eds. Onderdrukking en Verzet. 
Nederland in Oorlogstijd. Deel I. Amsterdam: 
Meulenhoff, no date.

Brugmans, Hajo. Geschiedenis van Nederland onder de 
Regering van Koningin Wilhelmina. Amsterdam: 1938.

Brugmans, I. J. Paardenkracht en Mensenmacht—Sociaal- 
Economische Geschiedenis van Nederland, 1795-1940. 

Colenbrander, H. T. Studien en aantekeningen over Nederlandse 

Cornelissen, J. et al., eds. De Taaie Rooie Rakkers. 

Dam van Isselt, W. E. van. et al. Nederland in de Branding. 
Baarn: Hollandia-druckerij, no date.

Does, J. C. van der. et al. Als't Moet. November 1918 en 
de Bijzondere Vrijwillige Landstorm. 's-Gravenhage: 
Nijgh en van Ditman, 1959.


Mollema, J. C. Rondom de Muiterij op "De Zeven Provincien". Deventer: van Hoeve, 1934.


Contemporary Articles, Pamphlets, Newspapers:


Capellen, R. Neerlands zelfstandigheid in gevaar? Amsterdam: 1916.


Militaire Spectator. A great many articles from the 1914 to 1923 issues have been used.

MAVORS—Maandschrift voor Militaire en Verlofsofficieren. I have used the 1914-1918 issues.

Orgaan der Vereeniging ter beoefening van het Krijgswetenschap. The 1914-1918 issues have been used.

Soldatencourant. (Augustes 1914—December 1918) In addition, I have used various articles from the Telegraaf, Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant (NRC), Haagse Dagblad, and lesser known newspapers from the 1914-1918 period.


Articles and Periodicals:


Novels:

Amsterdam: E. M. Querido, 1958.

Remarque, E. M. *All Quiet on the Western Front*.