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Luctor et Emergo: The impact of the Second World War on Zeeland

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"LUCTOR ET EMERGO": THE IMPACT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON ZEELAND

By

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B.A. Wilfrid Laurier University 1980

THESIS
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Abstract

This thesis is a study on the impact of the Second World War on Zeeland, the most southerly maritime province of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The thesis attempts to describe life in Zeeland before the outbreak of war and then looks at the changes caused by the arrival of the Germans in May 1940. For four and a half years Zeelanders (hereafter referred to as Zeeuws) lived and worked under the yoke of German rule and oppression before exchanging that yoke for freedom. It was here that Canadians played a role.

On a grand scale, the Canadian Army was part of that large force known as the "Allies" which fought the Nazi war machine anywhere and everywhere. On a much reduced scale, the Canadian Army, specifically the 2nd Canadian Corps, helped the Zeeuws get rid of their German oppressors. In the well-known "Battle of the Scheldt" the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Infantry Divisions over-ran the German "Scheldt Fortress" and by the middle of November 1944, most of Zeeland was liberated. After describing this battle and its human and material consequences, the paper concludes with the Zeeuws' struggle to rebuild their war-shattered province with the assistance of the Allies.

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Preface

This is a study on the impact of the Second World War on the Dutch province of Zeeland, one of eleven provinces in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The thesis attempts to describe life in Zeeland before the outbreak of war, the impact of the German occupation on the region, the battle for the liberation of Zeeland and its human and material consequences, and lastly, the struggle of the Zeeuws to rebuild their war-shattered province with the assistance of the Allies.

Canadian support did not only occur on the battlefields and the "polder-rings" but entered the homes of the Zeeuws and touched their lives. Canada stored grain for the Netherlands during the war, sold horses and excess war equipment to the Dutch and contributed monetarily to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Canada also gave of its manpower to help aright the Zeeuws' lifestyle to that which it had been before the war. This was done through such organizations as SHAEF's* Civil Affairs Department. Here then is the story of the fight against the Germans, and the battle's aftermath - the reconstruction and the civil aid.

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* Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force

The initiative to write a history such as this came from many sources. First and foremost it came from my advisor, Professor J.T. Copp, whose academic ability I will always admire, and who, through patience, coaxing, and example, constantly spurred me on to greater things. It was through Terry and Wilfrid Laurier University that I received the grant which allowed me to do my research in the Netherlands. To my parents who kept up the Dutch tradition in our Canadian home, and who helped me throughout my schooling both financially and with encouragement, I say "hartelijk bedankt." To brothers and sisters, thank you for your support, interest, and understanding. I would also like to convey appreciation to Lieutenant-Colonel William Barnard for the use of personal material and for countless visits to Casa Loma; the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie in Amsterdam, particularly to Mr. J. Zwaan; the Documentatie Centrum Zeeuws Deltagebied in Middelburg and Mr. Dumon-Tak for the trips around Walcheren; and to Oom Ben and Tante Lien who took me in as a son while I studied in Holland. Thanks also to my sister Carol for the many retypes of this work. Finally, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my wife Kathy who constantly heard me talk about the Scheldt in my sleep, and to my Father for the opportunity to live. Kathy, thanks for understanding; this is for our first-born, Tamara Joy.

Translating a language that is not my own often presented me with difficulties and I was fortunate in receiving much help, most of it from Professor Jack Zeyl.

With a task such as this, one is never finished. One strives, naturally, to create as complete a picture as is possible, but time is too short and the materials are very rich and in great abundance. One must, however, get them. And one finds them later on and then says, "Oh, if only I knew them then." Mistakes and omissions in the text are entirely my own.

Port Colborne, 1983.

SOURCE: Werner Warmbrunn, The Dutch Under German Occupation: 1940-1945 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. xiv.

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Chapter One: Introduction -- The Land and its People

"Luctor et Emergo" (I Struggle and I Emerge) are the words found on the crest of the Province of Zeeland. "Struggle and Emerge", these words emblazoned on this shield are not an empty slogan but a concise description of what it means to be a resident of Zeeland. The coat of arms, aptly chosen, depicts a lion half emerged from the sea over the motto. The Zeeuws have from their beginnings struggled with the strength of a lion against outside enemies and the relentless calling back of their land by the sea. Yet in the face of these and other struggles, the Zeeuws have withstood and have indeed overcome.

The country of the Netherlands is a small one and is bordered by the North Sea to the north and west of it, by Belgium on the South, and by Germany to its east. Its 12,500 square miles are divided into eleven provinces. In the north are the three agricultural provinces of Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe. Noord Holland, Zuid Holland and Utrecht are located in the industrial west, and opposite this block in the east are the provinces of Gelderland and Overijssel. South of the Rhine and its many branches lies another

agricultural group of provinces - Limburg, Brabant and Zeeland.

The land of such famous men as Grotius, Erasmus and Rembrandt is said to have been built by the Dutch. The old adage, "God made the world but the Dutch made Holland", although not necessarily true, does point out that the efforts of the Dutch people have played a significant part in the gaining of land. A considerable area of the country, about 38% of its surface, is below sea level (highest point is 323 metres above, lowest point is six metres below sea level) and owes its existence to the protection of miles and miles of dikes. What the sea cannot keep, the Dutch try and take using various reclamation and drainage schemes in order to increase Dutch territory. The gained ground is badly needed, both to house an ever-increasing population and to be used for agricultural purposes to feed the Netherland's population.

The Netherlands rate of population increase since 1846 has been the greatest in western Europe.[1] By 1938 its population was officially estimated at 8,728,569, making for a density of 686.5 people per square mile.[2] This figure immediately rose after the war to 710 persons per square

mile, the highest reported in the world.[3] Of these almost nine million people, over half of them (51%) live in towns and villages of less than 20,000 inhabitants.[4] The rest of the population lives in such important and large cities as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague, Utrecht, Haarlem, Groningen, Eindhoven, Tilburg, Nijmegen, Enschede and Arnhem, the bulk of them found in North and South Holland. These two provinces account for half of the country's population.

The theme of polarity or opposites runs quite deep in Dutch society and is visible when one looks at the Dutch population in terms of "race", religion and language. In the first cited category, one could generalize about the physical characteristics of the people in the Netherlands. In the northern part of the country you can find a people of "Nordic type" while in the southern part they are of an "Alpine type". The former are usually of light coloured hair, blue or gray-eyed and are of tall stature while their southern counterparts are darker haired, usually brown, brown-eyed and shorter in stature. In the area of religion, even though the Netherlands has historically been known for its religious tolerance, the polarity theme can again be seen. Basically, the country is a state of two religions, Dutch Reformed (Nederlandsch Hervormde Kerk), and Roman Catholic (Roomsch

Katholieke). Both have their roots in invading countries. Lastly, in the area of language, most Dutch speak a form of either 'Low Franconian' or 'Low Saxon'.[5] The exception to this, disregarding the many dialects found in each rural area, is in the province of Friesland where the inhabitants speak Friesian which has a similar status to the French language in Canada.

Located at the southern end of the coastal zone of the Netherlands, the province of Zeeland consisted of five main islands -- Schouwen-Duiveland, Tholen, North Beveland, South Beveland and Walcheren -- and a part of the mainland known as Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, which lays south of the WesterSchelde. (This latter area was joined to Zeeland in 1814, which upset many Belgians who were living there under French rule. Belgian attempts to get the land back in 1839 and 1919 failed). By 1940, only the first three remained islands, the latter two being joined to the mainland by causeways. Today, all are interconnected.

The province is unique in that it is largely surrounded by water and is very low-lying, no land exceeding ten feet in altitude except for the dikes.[6] If seen from the air it looks like a large maze, the perimeter being the major dikes

and the inner-maze being represented by minor dikes which separate the 619 polders.[7] (The word "polder" is Dutch but receives universal usage.) It is upon these inner-dikes that the roads and settlements are located. If not for these dikes and sand dunes, much of Zeeland would lay under water.

The province is rather remote from the rest of the Netherlands and had the second smallest provincial population in the country, 254,565 in 1938.[8] This has forced the province to be somewhat conservative and isolated.[9] Zeeland's isolation can be seen in the population stability found in North Beveland (1950 pop. 7,455) where between the years 1880 to 1950 the population increase was only 404 persons. The island gave up many people to other parts of the country but attracted few.[10] The people dress in their traditional costumes, something akin to the Mennonites north of Waterloo. The women wear white hats with coils of gold placed in them, black dresses with a bright apron over them, and wooden shoes. The men have the black sailer caps, black jackets and pants, and rubbers or wooden shoes.

The Zeeuws are a very heterogenous group. "Tussen de eilanden en tussen de bevolkings-en beroepsgroepen bestaan

grote verschillen."* [11] 40% of Zeeland's people are of alpine-type. Diversity in population comes from the fact that many came to the province as refugees during the days of the Republic, and from Belgium during the many border crises.[12]

About half the province's population (48.25%) are part of the Dutch Reformed Church. The other half is mostly Roman Catholic and is concentrated very heavily in the southern half, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.[13] The Catholics have made, as can be seen in the various place names in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, an indelible imprint on the southernmost part of the province.

The main concerns of the province's predominantly rural population of one quarter million are fishing and agriculture.[14] The estuaries of Zeeland are great beds for mussels and oysters. Around the area of Bergen op Zoom, ansjovis (anchovies) are taken. Most of the fishing in the province is considered coastal fishery but some sea fishing for eel, smelt, and herring is also done. 1940 was to bring major changes to the fishing economy.

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* Great differences exist between the islands and between the population -and occupational groupings.

Agriculturally, a variety of important crops are grown in this province, dubbed with the title, "Holland's bread basket." Zeeland's agricultural strength seems to lay in the diversity of products grown. Sugarbeets, potatoes, and various sorts of grain, especially flax, are the area's most important crops. Further diversification takes place not only with the types of crops grown but also the areas of agricultural importance. In Tholen, silver-onions are farmed, while peas come mainly from Walcheren. South Beveland, specifically the Goes area, is the fruitbelt and thus received the honour of being Zeeland's "fruit basket." To aid in the harvesting of these products, the Zeeuws make much use of horse-power, using the reknowned registered horses bred and raised in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

The second and very important concern which the Zeeuws have busied themselves with since the beginning of their history, is the sea and the guarding of themselves, their property, and their possessions against it. Generally speaking, the main islands of Zeeland have not changed drastically in outline since the 1300's.[15] What has changed is that there are only two islands left of the many that were once surrounding them.[16] The loss of many of these islands has been caused by nature's great force of water; the

retention of present land was made possible by the dedication and hard work the Zeeuws gave in their constant battle against the sea. This is most apparent when looking at this battle over time.

"The Coastal Dutch have now lived 24 centuries in their marshes and of these the first 20 or 21 were spent in peril. It was not until 1600 or 1700 that some reasonable security from flooding was achieved."[17] "In South Holland and Zeeland floods occurred in 1374, 1376, 1377, 1379, 1393 and 1396, and there were great inundations in 1405, 1421 and 1530-2."[18] The latter flood was given the name of "St. Felix flood of 1530", followed forty years later by the "Delta gebied", -- The All Saints flood. Both wrought great destruction on the province of Zeeland by drowning such lands as the islands of North and South Beveland. It was not until 1598 and 1570 respectively that these islands were again partially reclaimed.[19] Although the sea has taken some valuable land by widening and deepening the once-narrow strait between Cadzand and Vlissingen into the present-day West Scheldt, it has been held back by man and his dikes in such places as Westkapelle on Walcheren.[20] Here the two have combined to allow the sea no more than 185 yards of shoreline in the course of three and a half centuries.[21] Further floods

wreaking damage on this area occured in 1775, 1808, 1825, 1894, and 1916, the latter forcing the water to its highest point recorded in pre-World War II times.[22] The war was to bring the peril of major flooding back to Zeeland.

The fear of such floodings in all their fury has led the various levels of government to get together to see what steps could be taken to mitigate, if not prevent, the hardships caused by the floods. Today, the provincial government of Zeeland and the Dutch federal government have come up with a "Delta Plan" which will see dikes constructed in this south-western province which will join a host of islands together and to the mainland. These dikes will be multi-functional in that they will be able to open and close which will allow for the continued existence of the large sea-mussel fields and will also prevent flood damage when the water rises. Vehicle traffic will also be able to drive along the tops of these dikes.[23]

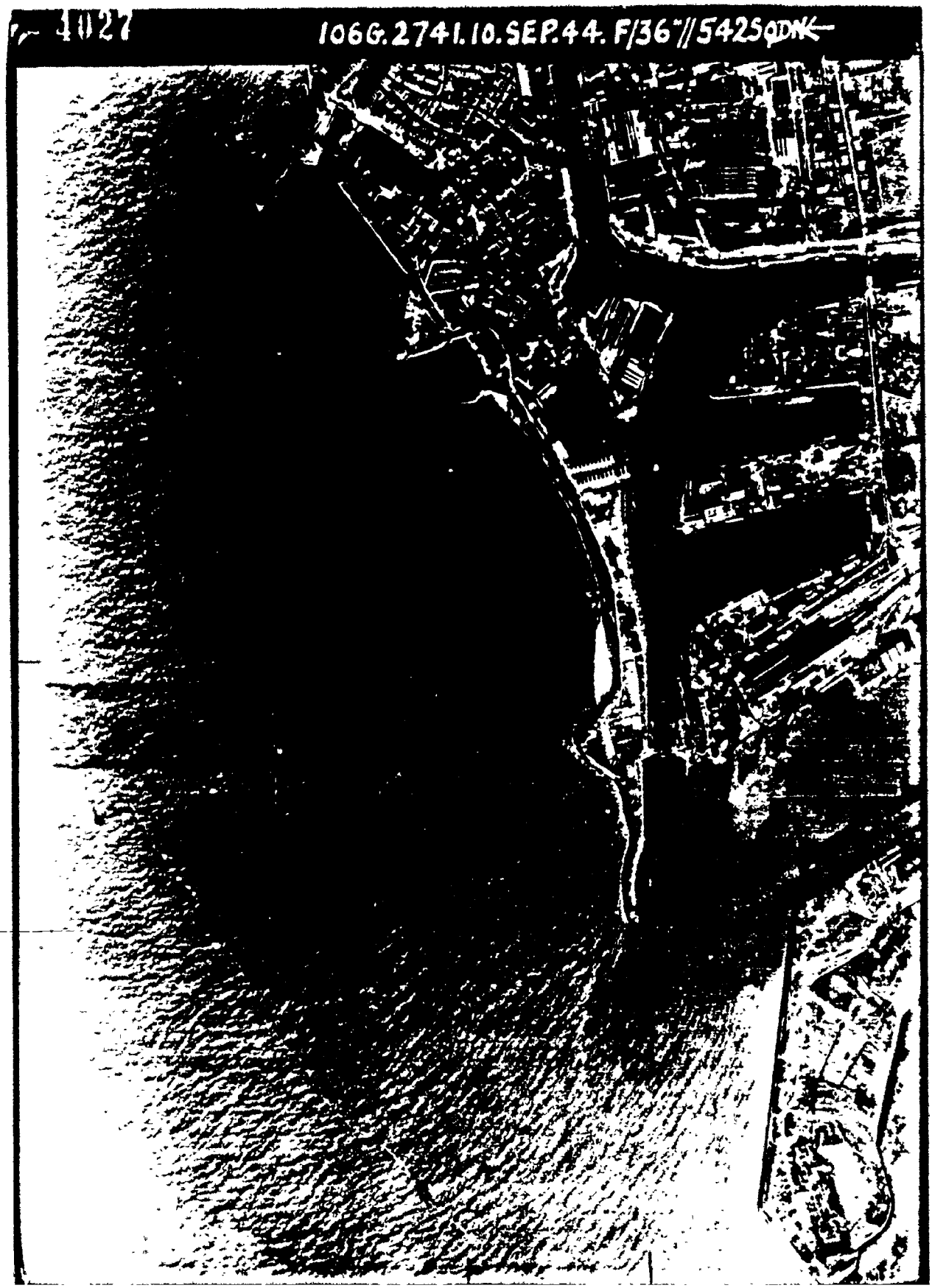
In the history of Zeeland the sea and its waters have also been good to the province. Before the outbreak of the Eighty Years War, Zeeland's merchant fleet and its herring and cod fisheries were second to those of Holland. As well, the sea offered a cheap and readily available form of

"highway" for Zeeuws boats and gave Zeeland two good ports.

The first of these ports is Terneuzen, situated in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen with a population (1938) of 11,000. It is located at the mouth of the nineteen mile long Ghent canal, which comes from western Belgium and France. The canal was opened in 1827 but it was not until 1870 when the railway came to the port that Terneuzen became important for trade purposes. By the start of WWII, the port had an inner and outer harbour for inland and seagoing vessels and had excellent lifting appliances.[24] Terneuzen also has a main road following the canal to Ghent used constantly by the Germans during the war as a supply road.

The second and by far the most important port is that of Vlissingen (Flushing), a city of 23,000. The port, with an outer harbour and also an inner harbour combining both a small commercial and a naval harbour, is the third largest port in the Netherlands.[25] It is located at the southern end of Walcheren Island and is at the mouth of the Scheldt River. With the completion of the South Beveland railway in 1866, its importance increased for it was now connected to the rest of the Netherlands. A fine main road from Vlissingen to Bergen op Zoom links the port to the rest of Holland as well.

Vlissingen's harbour



In 1875 the Stomevaart Maatschappij Zeeland was located here linking it up to England by a ferry service. The same year the shipbuilding firm "de Schelde" evolved giving employment to many and offering both diesel and turbine engines to ships of up to 21,000 tons displacement.[26] The port, as well as offering ferry service and shipbuilding works, also offers coal and oil-bunkering stations. These latter came about because of government aid in modernizing the port between 1910 - 1935.[27] When the Germans came in June of 1940, the locks separating the outer and inner harbour were destroyed, piers were wrecked and much of the port was rendered inaccessible because of boats sunk therein.[28] The port would receive further damage in the battle fought in late 1944. The ferry service from Breskens to Vlissingen, used to carry workers on the south shore to Vlissingen before the war, would also be copied by the Germans in late '44.

Other cities and towns of importance in Zeeland are first of all its capital, Middelburg, home to the "Lange Jan" tower, a beautiful town hall and an old abbey.[29] The city of 21,000 lies almost in the centre of Walcheren Island and is four miles north of Vlissingen along the Walcheren Canal. The city, in the sixteenth century, acted as an outport to the city of Antwerp, but thereafter lost importance for it

was sympathetic to Spanish rule. It lost "its role both as an administrative and ecclesiastical centre and . . . also much of its trade, which passed to ports further north."[30] Stagnation then set in and the city "ceased to grow ...[remaining] within the confines of its [star-shaped] sixteenth century defences down to the present century."[31] Other towns, of which more will be heard later, are Westkapelle, Goes, and Breskens.

Chapter Two: German Occupation -- What Changed?

During the First World War, the Netherlands had a standing army of 500,000 troops but managed to maintain a position of neutrality throughout the war. When war was declared in the autumn of 1939 the Netherlands immediately proclaimed their neutrality on 3 September, and for awhile it appeared as if the Germans would indeed leave their neighbouring country alone. All that changed in the spring of 1940.

The Dutch had been listening to Fuhrer Adolf Hitler's speeches and had watched his country build up its arms. With the German forces annexing the Rhineland, the Dutch became fearful of the German military threat and began to take steps to meet a possible invasion. The defense budget was increased, the air force strengthened and stock piles of food were laid up.[1] The Dutch trump card, to be used only if Germany violated the Netherlands' neutrality was the "Grebbe Line". This system of defense involved the flooding of threatened areas and specifically of protected "Fortress Holland", that heavily populated area north of the rivers Waal and Maas.[2] It worked in conjunction with other water

lines[3] and seemingly promised even the weakest army the element of time for defending and for waiting until outside help could come and help fight off the attack.

At 4 a.m. on Friday, 10 May 1940, the Germans struck at the Netherlands. A parachute division commanded by S.S. General Student landed all around the Hague with orders to capture the Queen.[4] This attack was frustrated with heavy losses to the enemies. The rest of the invasion, entrusted to the German Sixth Army, went like clock-work with the Germans being able to enter "Fortress Holland" that first day. Some German soldiers were captured and sent off immediately to England but on the whole, with the help of surprise and speed, fifth columnists and disguises, the Germans quickly over-ran the country. After the heavy and very destructive bombardment of Rotterdam by the Luftwaffe, the Netherlands quickly surrendered on the 15th of May.[5]

During the 1940 invasion, the Netherlands had managed to send some navy, army and air force personnel over to England. "Dutch seamen at sea or who put to sea at the time of the invasion, estimated to number 15,000 men, joined the Allied naval forces."[6] Other personnel as well, aided the Allied cause in their fight against Germany. The Dutch government and the Royal family, who made up the bulk of the 2,400

civilians who also left by sea, arrived in London safely even though the Germans were to have captured the Queen.[7]

The Dutch surrendered on the 15th of May but this surrender did not include the troops which were fighting the Germans in Zeeland. The Dutch, with the aid of the French, resisted until 17 May when the Germans shelled Zeeland's capital city, Middelburg. A mixed Allied force continued resistance until the 23rd of May in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Then the fighting stopped and the Germans emerged victorious not only in the Netherlands but also in Belgium and France.[8] Now the Dutch would have to adjust their lifestyles and learn to live under the yoke of their German oppressors.

With the surrender of the Dutch by General H. G. Winkelman, Supreme Commander of the Dutch Army, and the departure of the Dutch government to London, the Germans took over governmental authority in the Netherlands. Hitler "assigned the supreme civilian authority in the occupied territory to a High Commissioner (Reichskommissar fur die besetzten niederlandischen Gebiete) who was directly responsible to the Fuehrer."[9] That man was Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart.[10] His office was basically to supervise the existing Dutch governmental agencies and to ensure that German policies were carried out. Seyss-Inquart set up his

office with himself as head and four German Commissioners General under him who supervised the Dutch Administration. The four Commissioners General were Wimmer in Administration and Justice, Fischbock in Finance and Economy, Rauter for Public Security, and Schmidt for Special Questions (Without Portfolio). He also appointed 'German "Representatives of the High Commissioner" (Beauftragte) who supervised provincial and local governments.'[11] These men, the High Commissioner and his associates, it needs to be stressed, did not "design the basic German policies that determined the course of the occupation . . . [but rather] simply executed such policies as the economic exploitation of the Netherlands, the labor draft, and the deportation of the Jews, which were decided by Hitler on the advice of his closest political and military advisors."[12]

Just as a German occupied the High Commissioner's office, so other Nazi party members, be they Dutch or German, started to replace Dutch officials in various roles. With Seyss-Inquart and his staff assuming the Queen's and parliament's powers, there was no need for the federal legislature to meet (especially since part of it was in London). Hence it was dissolved. The eleven provincial legislatures met the same fate. While their elected members were not needed anymore, such was not the case for the

Queen's Commissioners. These men were at the head of the provincial governments. They and their counterparts of the cities and gemeentes (municipalities), the burgemeesters (mayors) were retained by the Germans in the early stages of the war. Some did the jobs the Germans asked of them, others said they would do them and then tried to use the power of their office to sabotage the plans. Still others flatly refused to co-operate with the new rulers and were either relieved of their job or went underground. Many needed to be replaced and their office was taken over, usually by a Dutch Nazi.

The Dutch Nazis came from the Nationaal Socialistische Beweging (National Socialist Party or N.S.B.). The N.S.B. party, founded in December 1931, was under the leadership of Anton A. Mussert. By the start of the war, its members totalled 27,000 men. It reached its peak of 75,373 by the third quarter of 1941, after which its membership declined.[13]

The N.S.B. movement was a totalitarian one. 'The party platform of the N.S.B. called for a "strong government, national self-respect, discipline, order, and solidarity of all classes of the population and the precedence of the national interest over that of groups, and that of groups over the self-interest of the individual. . .".'[14] Mussert

envisioned himself as a ruler over a "Greater Netherlands" and saw the Germans as a vehicle to obtain this dream. The Germans, ironically, saw the N.S.B. as simply a "tool to be employed".[15] Since they were the dominant power and in control, their policies and ideas wore off on the N.S.B. members. By serving the Nazis and by adopting some of their beliefs and practices, the N.S.B. incurred the wrath and ridicule of most Dutchmen.

At his trial in Nuremburg, when asked about placing N.S.B. members in government offices, Seyss-Inquart replied, "I did it because in the last analysis I could rely on them; all others sabotaged my orders."[16] For their faithfulness, many were rewarded with such high posts as President of the Board of Leiden University. Others, 275 to be exact, became burgemeesters or heads of organizations created by the Germans.[17] All of them were part of the German's plan to 'nazify' the Netherlands.[18]

One Dutch N.S.B. member the Germans quickly put into a prominent position was Max Blokzijl. "Lying Max", as he was better known, was a journalist turned radio propogandist. He was a "man of sharp wit and considerable eloquence [and] he became the foremost preacher of the Nazi gospel in Holland".[19] It was to his radio station, beamed from the

city of Hilversum, that the Germans wanted the Dutch to tune their radios. The Dutch, however, did not necessarily do this, many of them listening to foreign broadcasts. Since the Queen had gone into exile, she could speak to her nation daily through Radio Oranje's quarter-hour programme beamed from London by the B.B.C. which many Dutchmen thoroughly enjoyed.[20] The other radio station that beamed in a Dutch programme was station WRUL from Boston, Massachusetts.[21]

Radio Oranje's birth came in July 1940 and the Germans immediately made it an offense to listen to the programme that started off with a few words from the Dutch Queen. Controlling the listeners was a large task and almost an impossible one though, as the Dutch had more than one million sets in the country,[22] and these sets could be hidden anywhere in the house --attics and hollowed-out books were favourite storing places. Although Seyss-Inquart was asked to issue a directive giving permission to confiscate the wireless sets in 1940, it was not until May 1943 that such a directive was carried out.[23] The Dutch, all the while kept listening to the foreign broadcasts by various means and through co-operation. The latter came in the form of one household sharing a common radio with others, or by hooking up a system of loudspeakers to one's neighbour's house.

The network of contacts the Dutch people established helped to keep them abreast of the radio annoucements and the news. Within this network, mimeographed sheets were circulated containing the news of the day or the week. Once read, the sheet was passed along by a variety of methods and inconspicuously, since they were outlawed by the Nazi regime.[24] Inconspicuous meant carrying it to your neighbour's house stuffed in your sock, or if it was a lady carrier, "keeping it close to her heart".[25] Most of these "personal" newspapers were printed for a single town or local community.

In May 1940 there were over 4,000 papers or journals expressing every shade of opinion in the Netherlands. Almost every town over 20,000 had its own paper. The largest paper in terms of foreign circulation was the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant. Within the country itself, Amsterdam's Telegraaf and its associate paper, the Courant Nieuws van de Dag, were the largest. "After a few months of comparatively unmolested life the newspapers . . . [after the invasion] passed under the German steamroller."[26] Many of the newspapers ceased publication for "as of October 1, 1941, no less than 53 dailies or 1/3 of the total, and 520 of the 650 periodicals were suppressed by the Nazis."[27]

The Germans did print their own newspaper, the Deutsche Zeitung in den Niederlanden which came out in June 1940. The other papers which were allowed to stay active either already supported the Nazi party such as the N.S.B. daily, the Nationale Dagblad, and its weekly Volk in Vaderland, or had their editors removed and replaced by some chosen few. Many Dutchmen could not put up with the German press and a host of clandestine newspapers evolved over the course of the war. In the Netherland's first year of war there were sixty-two papers with a circulation of about 57,000 copies.[28] This number continued to grow, especially after D-Day when the need for news was so great. In the last quarter of 1944, "350 new news-bulletins arose."[29] The press' desire to help in the defeat of Germany, and its need to cater to the various religious, political and cultural groups all helped to make for a total of nearly 1,200 underground papers in the country.[30]

The papers were not the only written words that were outlawed. "In December 1941, one hundred and twenty books were placed on the forbidden list."[31] That month as well, saw the United States join the Allied side in their hope of defeating the Nazis. Their entry immediately forced the Nazis to decree that books written by American authors born

after 1904 "were henceforth forbidden."[32] Other books such as school texts were also scrutinized and if there was anything in them that was critical of the Third Reich, then they were banned.

The German occupation affected the Dutch government, the country's broadcasting and its press, but it also went deeper and affected physical well-being. As soon as the Germans entered the Netherlands, food rationing was begun and by April 1941 virtually all foods such as bread and butter, milk and cheese, fats and meat were all rationed.[33] One ounce of cheese was considered "sufficient" per week according to the German orders, as was one and three-quarter litres of milk per man per week.[34] Up until the end of 1943, each Dutch adult was getting a daily average of 1800 calories.[35] As the war went on, with the Germans exporting more and more food to Germany, and farm machinery and fertilizers becoming scarce, the caloric level decreased. As the German demands for food became ever greater, the caloric level dropped to an average of 1350 per adult by July '44. This level went down to 400 calories a day during the hunger winter of 1944 - 45 (mostly in North and West Netherlands).

With rationing came the need for control, control for

permits and cards. Each Dutchman had to have two vital documents. The first was his ration book.[36] This book contained stamps, issued monthly, for various types of foods and necessities such as shoes, bicycle tires and coal.[37] The second document was the persoonsbewijs (identification card) which contained one's picture, fingerprint and personal data. To be stopped by a German without the latter document was grounds for immediate arrest. As the war progressed "there was a whole system of permits for countless purposes . . . . In the later period of the war, almost everything depended on some sheet of paper, as, for example, possession of a bicycle or the right to leave one's home after curfew."[38] For one group of people in the Netherlands, the 'persoonsbewijs' was not as important as another means of identification. For that group, the arm-band with the Star of David on it was ample identification.

Just before the German invasion, 140,000 Jews lived in Holland of whom 79% were Dutch citizens.[39] By 31 August 1940 the first of many anti-Jewish decrees was announced by the Germans. These measures culminated in the mass deportation and imprisonment of Jews, beginning in July 1942. By the end of the war, seventy-five percent of the Dutch Jews had perished, mostly in the camps of Auschwitz and Zobibor.[40]

A reproduced 'persoonsbewijs'.

It must be said here that many Dutch attempted to help the Jews in various ways. As early as October 1940 the six leading Protestant churches made a joint appeal to Seyss-Inquart against the German anti-semitic measures, an appeal made again the next year.[41] Individuals as well helped the Jews out by keeping them hidden in the attics or false rooms in their house.[42] Keeping these onderduikers (divers)* hidden was in itself a chore and a threat to one's life.[43] One had to obtain food for them and this became increasingly more difficult as the German occupation went on.[44] Raids on food coupon distribution centres were frequent in order to get the required number for those in the underground. The Germans made things difficult by executing the raiders if caught and by introducing new forms of ration books which were to be "fool proof".[45]

The Zeeuws themselves also aided the Jews in their plight. After the famous "Night of Crystal" (9-10 November, 1938) the Zeeuws donated at least f4,661 to the Jewish refugee fund during a time when the economy was not at its best. Total Dutch giving was f400,000. The Zeeuws port of Vlissingen, as well, served as a jump-off port for Jews

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*A diver was a person who stayed in hiding because he/she was wanted by the German police.

coming in from Germany and attempting to make their way to America.[46]

The first impact of Nazi racial policy on Zeeland was the removal of all Jews from the province. Most of them were sent to Amsterdam and from that holding depot they were sent on to such stations as Westerbork. Zeeland had a Jewish population of less than 250 "full or half-Jews". Of this total, only twenty-five survived the German annihilation scheme, the fallen having their names recorded in a Jewish cemetery in Middelburg after the war.[47]

"From the beginning of the occupation, heavy punishments had been threatened for actions directed against the armed services, such as espionage, sabotage, and attacks on soldiers."[48] As the occupation went on these sentences became more pronounced and much harsher. In February 1941, strikers were threatened with a minimum one year prison term for being involved in a strike. Five months later the punishment of five years in prison was given to those involved in such things as anti-German demonstrations, publication of clandestine newspapers, etc. By May 1944, in anticipation of military operations and in order to control the Dutch population which was becoming more and more vocal

and daring in acts of sabotage against the oppressors, Seyss-Inquart declared martial law.

"Under martial law, the death penalty was mandatory for practically any action against the occupying power."[49] In his personal diary, M.P. de Bruin recalls the account of Johan Wijers, a boy of 16 years who was shot to death after being tortured because he stole two rifles and some ammunition.[50] Others in Zeeland, such as Jakob Franke, were shot for not coming forward for work gangs when the Germans called.[51] Martial law allowed local police chiefs to become increasingly ruthless. This made life extremely difficult for the Dutch, especially as it seemed that liberation was so close at hand after D-day.

Those in the concentration and labour camps were not the only Dutchmen forced to give their labour to the German war cause. In 1941, with an increasing labour shortage in Germany since many civilians had to join the army, measures were taken to entice Dutch workers to go to Germany to replace this loss. With this need for labourers becoming ever greater, and "enticements" and "persuasions" not working, the Germans began mass deportations of workers. The evacuation of coastal districts provided a large number of

workers for these people were just shipped to Germany.[52] In 1942 and 1943 students were rounded up to be used as workers. By January 1944, there were 350,000 Dutch civilians and prisoners of war working in Germany.[53] These actions created much unrest in the country and led an ever-increasing number of people to go "underground".[54]

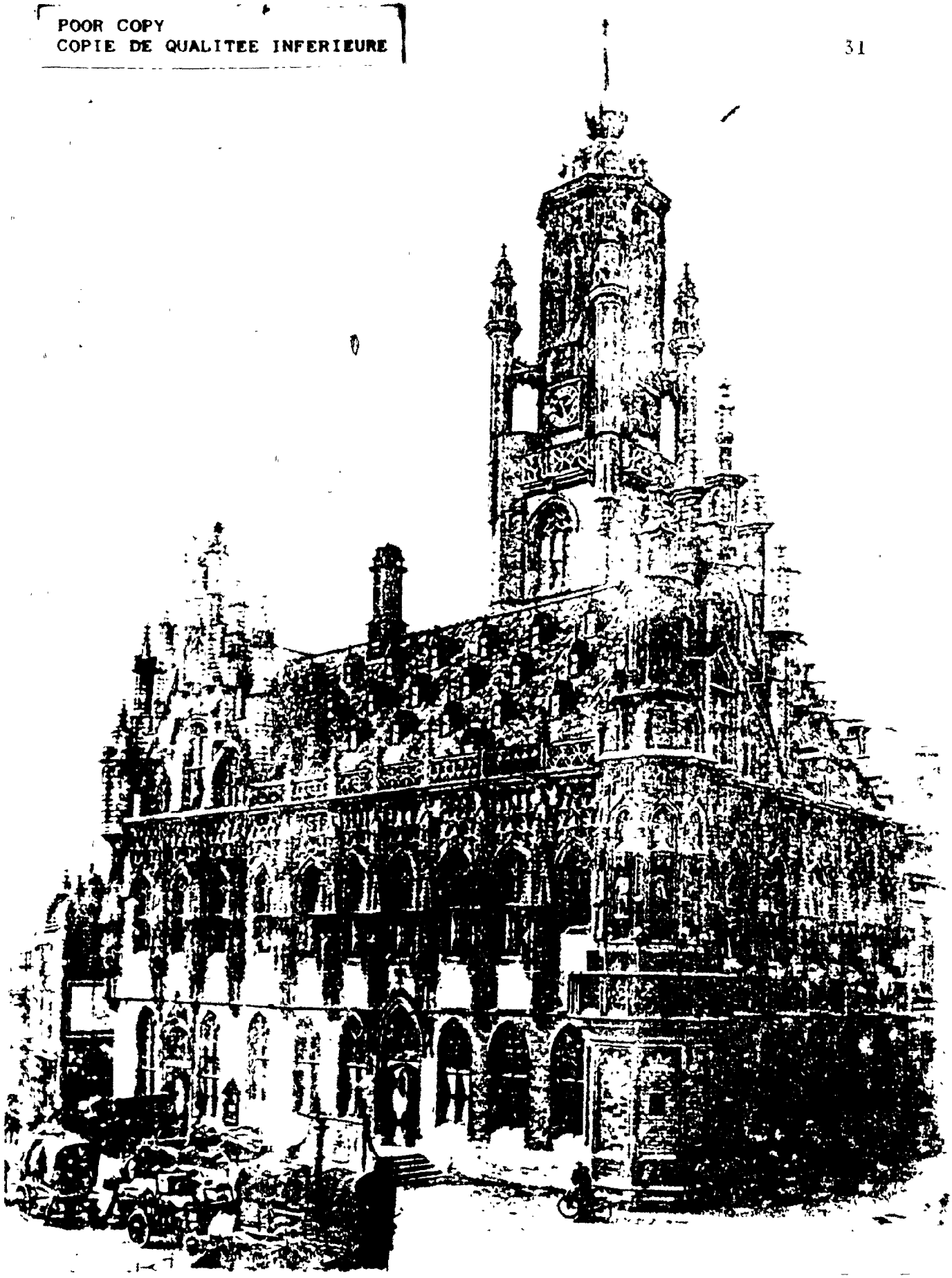
It was within this larger pattern of the German occupation that Zeeland had to live for the war years. Most of the changes made nationally affected the province but there were also local changes. These, however, came some months after the invasion. In the immediate post-invasion period the Zeeuws population in the rural districts barely saw their conquerors except for the odd patrol, something which remained true for some parts of the Netherlands throughout the war. One author, who wrote down his impressions of the war days in Westkapelle wrote:

> The dwellers of Walcheren were jealous, when after sojourning to other parts of the land they saw no Germans, no bunkers, no O.T. workers, and no barracks. Was it ever peaceful there. As soon as they stepped out of the train in Middelburg it started again; Germans, left and right.[55]

This initial period where the Germans "carried themselves correctly" soon gave way to the realities of war, and "with the years they became more annoying and finally degenerated into a horrible group."[56]

While not all the Zeeuws saw their immediate captors for some time, the inhabitants of Middelburg saw them almost immediately as the province's capital became the centre for the German forces as well. Had one even removed the Germans from this city though, their contact with the people could still have been seen in the rubble. When Middelburg was shelled on the 17th of May, its eighty-six meter 'Lange Jan' tower was destroyed, the beautiful city hall burned, and the abbey partially ruined. This capital had more houses lost in this year than in all the other cities of Zeeland put together.[57] A pressing need for dwellings and stores arose and by the end of August 1940, fifty-one makeshift stores were erected in the capital. That month as well, twenty-five homes were contracted out and finished off eleven months later.[58] Destruction was not limited to these May days; through Allied bombings Zeeland's towns and villages would continue to suffer.

In the air-battle of Britain, the German Luftwaffe had



This is what the City Hall of Middelburg, capital of Zeeland, looked like before May, 1940, when the Germans bombarded the city unmercifully. The building was gutted by fire and completely destroyed. Built in 1506-13, it was adorned with 25 life-size statues of Zeeland's counts and countesses

taken it to the English by bombing the country and its capital. The Germans, however, could not break the spirit of the English, nor their air force and, by the second year of the war, the British were returning some of their own fire-power from the air upon Germany. The British also had to hit the Germans where they were located and this often was in occupied territory. The province of Zeeland was not spared air bombardments. The Germans had the advantages of camouflage and such defences as bunkers and other finished parts of the Atlantic Wall in which to take cover when the air raids occured. The general population could only hide in their cellars or get out of the towns. Vlissingen's houses and industries such as 'de Schelde' and the Provinciaal Zeeuws Elektricitijt Maatschappij (PZEM) office, due to the aid they naturally gave to the enemy, received much destruction due to air raids. Even though Vlissingen did not undergo as much destruction as did Middelburg in 1940, "it was a target for air attacks during the occupied years", as was the case on 22 April 1942, when Vlissingen's harbour was severely blasted by the Royal Air Force.[59] These bombings "cost many citizens their life over the course of the war years."[60] Death and air bombardments also forced a heavy toll on the city's population. By November 1944 it fell from

23,000 to 12,000.[61]

The Zeeuws, even in the face of danger and seeing the destruction meted out on their land by the British planes, never turned against the Allies. The Germans got the brunt of the blame for the damages done. Of the English it was often said, "Tommy . . . came for a visit," and, "Tommy, who again for the umpteenth time sadly made a mistake."[62] Life magazine in 1945 noted that that same spirit of pro-British, anti-German feeling was still evident in the Zeeuws even after the Royal Air Force had put the famous island of Walcheren under salt water.[63]

With the arrival of the German troops, the Nazi flag was hung up in Middelburg at the residence of the Reichscommissaris of Zeeland, Willem Munzer. Here it hung for fifty-three consecutive months.[64] Munzer, subordinate to Seyss-Inquart and controller of all Zeeland, was not the commander of the German forces in the province, rather he oversaw the day-to-day administration. The German army in Zeeland had two commanders. From Vlissingen north, all the troops were under the Commanding General for the Occupied Territories of the Netherlands, General F. Christian Christiansen, (only the 719 Infantry Division found on the two northern islands and St. Philipsland was under him). The

rest of the troops, specifically the 65th Infantry Division and the 712 Infantry Division were under the commander for Belgium and northern France, General A. Von Faulkenhausen. In 1942, Hitler, seeing the importance of Antwerp, had the boundary line changed from the western arm of the Scheldt to the Oosterschelde. This put Walcheren, the two Bevelands and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen under command of the Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Belgium and northern-France, von Faulkenhausen.[65]

Shortly after the German occupation of Zeeland, the Zeeuws had to abide by and obey a host of new rules. Curfews were imposed on the province's inhabitants with no one to be out on the streets from midnight to four in the morning. After the 27th of March 1944, one could not be out in the open after 11:00 p.m.; by 5 September, one could not be out after 8:00 p.m.[66] All weapons, save for antiques, had to be handed in and travel within and without the province was curtailed, each traveller having to get a written slip of permission to move about from the various burgemeesters.[67] Local movement became even more difficult when the Germans demanded that the populace hand in their bicycles in 1942. This action was designed to make the German troops much more mobile and therefore ready for a possible British invasion.[68]

As time went on, movement on the waters for Zeeland's fishermen was also curtailed. Zeeuws' boats could not roam freely having to stay together in packs, nor could they go where the fish might be --if the schools were not in rivers or inlets and sea-branches, then the fishermen had a bad day. Fishermen's freedoms were further reeled in. They could not leave the harbour until an hour after sun-rise and never on foggy or snowy days. Once out of port, they could not fish for very long since they were only given enough fuel to fish for a few hours, and that after being pulled with other smaller fishing vessels to the fishing spot. These and other German measures which literally ruined the oyster harvest for many years, forced a decline in the provincial catch.[69] Needless to say, these restrictions when enforced on the country as a whole, resulted in a loss of fish caught in the sea after 1941. In that year nineteen million kilograms of fish were caught; in 1942, thirteen and a half million kilograms, and in 1943 that figure dropped to 10.9 million kilograms. The coastal fishing catch stayed fairly even for these three years at 15.8 million kilograms although this was half the catch of 1940.[70]

Items other than weapons and bicycles were also "requested" by the Germans. In October 1940, "Winterhulp

Nederland" came into existence. This was a charity group inaugurated by Seyss-Inquart.[71] The W.H.N. was advertised as a programme to redistribute surplus goods and money from those who had it to those who were in need of it. Many Dutchmen responded to this call for aid but not too enthusiastically for it was quickly seen that some of the money and materials were being pilfered by the occupying army or were being sent back to Germany. This resulted in many tricks being played against the W.H.N. collectors. People on the third floor would yell out their windows to the collector, "Come up, I have something for you." Climbing the many steep stairs (characteristic of Dutch homes), the collector would be greeted by no-one as the person would have left the building or gone into the attic to hide. This became tiring to the collectors, most of whom were N.S.B.'ers.[72]

In June 1941, when Seyss-Inquart made another request for the Dutch to hand in various metal articles ranging from ashtrays to bird cages, the Dutch again responded poorly. The Germans made up for this lack of metals by taking more than 200 bronze bells and clocks from Zeeland to be smelted down for war materials. Whereas the Germans requested outrightly the handing in of some needed articles, others

such as electricity, soup, coal and petrol were just rationed.[73] All homes using electricity were sent a letter stating that they needed to be careful in the amount used. If one went over the alloted limit one was given an hefty fine; if one grossly went over the limit, service was shut off.[74] The newspaper, Provinciale Zeeuwsche Courant carried the list of rationed food items, and constant reminders for one to be careful with the use of such precious commodities as water were displayed in various local newspapers.[75] This handing in of articles, and the rationing of items led the Zeeuws population to become quite ingenious in substituting articles for rationed items, or by repairing the older articles. For example, to compensate for one's flat or bald tire, burlap or other cloth was tied around the rims of the bicycle wheels allowing the rider some comfort.

Once food items were rationed, many town and village inhabitants looked to the suppliers of goods for the extra items. Bakers and farmers were often asked for various items in a bartering system. Although many suppliers did give extra to the Zeeuws population, it became increasingly difficult to do as the war years went on, due to a general shortage of foodstuffs and changes in Zeeland's farming practices. This forced an increase in 'official' as well as 'black market' food prices, as can be seen in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

The following shows the official prices of articles in 1944. The second figure is the black market figure for that article during the winter months, 1944/1945.

1 kilogram potatoes	f .10/ f 7.
1 kilogram butter	f 2.60/ f 150.
1 litre milk	f .17/ f 10.
1 egg	f .10/ f 7.
1 kilogram flour	f .26/ f 60.
20 cigarettes	f .90/ f 60.
1 men's suit	f52.50/ f1000.

Source: Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek, Economische en Sociale Kroniek der Oorlogsjaren, 1940-1945 (Utrecht: de Haan, 1947), p. 266.

TABLE 1b

Using July 1938-June 1939 as the base year (=100), the following increases occured for foodstuffs for the six years following:

1938-1939: 102.5; 1939-1940: 121.4; 1940-1941: 139.9;

1941-1942: 156.7; 1942-1943: 156.9; 1943-1944: 159.1;

1944-1945: 172.3

Source: Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek, Statische Zakboek 1944-1946 (Utrecht: de Haan, 1947), p. 99

The Germans were constantly demanding things of the farmer that made his job of producing food more and more difficult. Farmers found it hard to work the land without their usual number of horses since many of them had to be given over to the Germans. Workers were scarce especially during the harvest times, as more were being requestioned for the German's labour pool. Fertilizers for the fields were non-existent and with the taking of farm animals, natural fertilizers were not meeting the needs. Cows, as well, had to be delivered to the enemy for food and also to cut down the acreage needed for grasslands.[76] What was used as pasture could now be sown with such oil-producing grains as rapeseed which would produce a much needed wartime commodity - fat.[77] Even though this "bread-basket" produced in 1943, 25% of the country's sugarbeets and 46% of its white and brown beans, it was difficult to increase output to meet the demand.[78] The floodings of 1944 would make this even more difficult.

With the conqueror constantly giving orders to hand this in, sign out here, work there, do not walk there, the Zeeuws naturally became resentful of their overseers. They were indeed 'bezet' -- occupied, but during the time of occupation they could 'verzet' -- resist. In his book Bezet, Verzet,

Ontzet, Karhof describes the growth of resistance: "An important ingredient in feeding the flame of resistance was the illegal [underground] press."[79] Such papers as the nationally circulated Trouw (Truth), Vrije Stemmen uit de Ganzestad (Free Voices from Goose City),* De Stem voor God, Koningen en Vaderland (The voice for God, Monarchy and the Fatherland) from Bergen op Zoom, and Overzicht der Nieuwsberichten (Summary of news reports) from Vlissingen, were all passed around in this province.[80] Some were dailies, some weeklies; a few consisted of just one sheet of paper while others were larger. All, nevertheless, helped to keep the populace informed. These papers filled in an information void but more importantly tied the people together in an illegal act of resistance.

The Zeeuws were further tied together in their resistance work through various national groups that operated within the province.[81] Of the many groups, two in particular should be mentioned.[82] The Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers (National Organization to Aid Divers) was simply known as the L.O. 'This organization, which had its contacts by thousands in many places in the Netherlands

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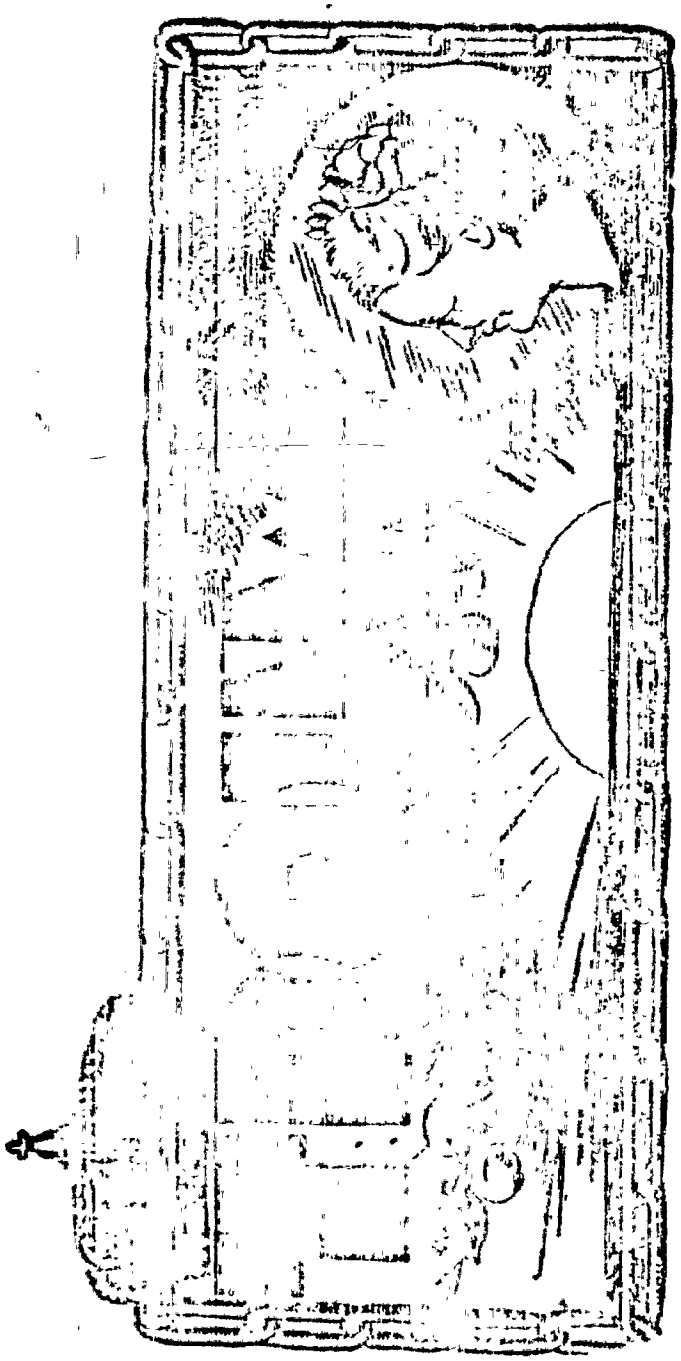
* "Goes" in old Dutch means "goose".



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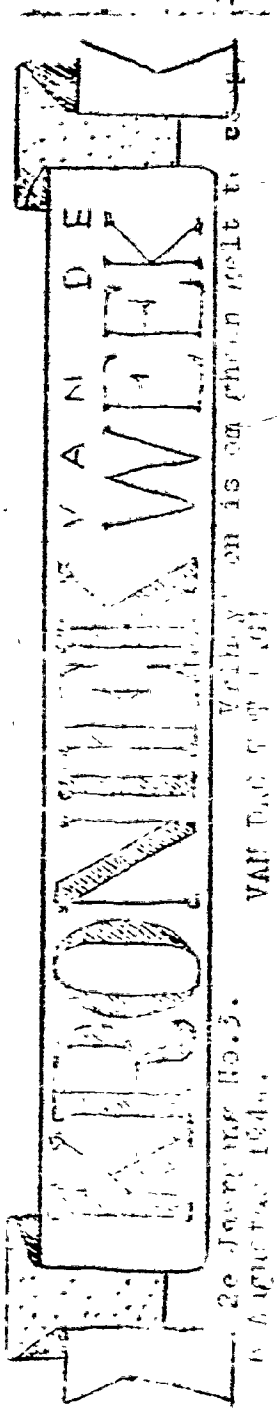


Two examples of clandestine papers found in Zeeland.

arranged the sheltering and care of the "divers".'[83] This was a formidable task. Some Zeeuws such as those in the monastery at Rilland-Bath took and hid divers wherever and whenever possible. Others, such as the farmers in North Beveland "were not very willing to take in divers."[84] Still, almost 2,000 divers were cared for in the province. This figure was broken down to about 450 in Walcheren, 500 in western Zeeuws Vlaanderen, 800 in its eastern counterpart, 100 in South Beveland and 60 in North Beveland.[85]

The second major group, the KP--Knokploegen--consisted of many "Knuckles Gangs", who were "small but well-chosen teams of men, [and who] worked in close contact with the L.O., their job being to attack the rationing offices in order to get possession of the necessary ration cards" to feed the many 'mouths' so carefully hidden from the German police.[86] These "Coup de Main" armed parties further upset "the German adm machine, by stealing . . . blank identity docs and freeing political prisoners. Many successful raids of this nature have been made and these must have caused the occupying power a great deal of annoyance."[87]

"Zeeland did not only fight through organized resistance . . . [but there was] also much evidence of unorganized resistance . . ." against their Aryan oppressors.[88] Some members of the police force tipped people off so that they

could hide when a warrant was issued for them.[89] They also warned those who had radios of impending searches. Four farmers in Goes, not willing to be outdone, showed their resistance on market day by each leading in a stallion. The first stallion had a red ribbon braided into its tail, the next had a white ribbon, the third one a blue, and the fourth an orange. Their show horses definitely showed the Germans where the farmers' loyalty lay.[90]

A host of other forms of resistance were practiced by the Zeeuws. They were active in the underground railways which helped to wisk downed English pilots away from the German grasp. Others wore orange flowers on the country's national days, or covered walls with pro-Dutch grafitti.[91] Some Zeeuws wanted to relay intelligence to England and after September of 1944 to the Canadians as they moved into the province. In his multi-volumed series, de Jong documents an account of a P.H. de Winde who swam across the Braakman to meet the Canadians on the evening of 27 September to tell Simonds about the HQ, strength and radar posts of the 64th Infantry Division.[92] Vrije Stemmen recounts two resisters in the OD (Onderdienst) who climbed up onto Canadian tanks and acted as guides in the area. Later other members went with Canadian troops to North Beveland to clean up the area.[93]

Many ordinary people "resisted" by simply making life difficult for the Germans in a number of ways, even at the cost of imprisonment.[94]

When, with the taking of Antwerp, liberation seemed imminent, resisters in Axel and North Beveland quickly took German soldiers prisoner. When days went by and liberation did not come, the soldiers in Axel were released. Those captured in North Beveland were released as well but only when help came. A German patrol boat came from Walcheren, its guns set fire to two farms on the island and its occupants threatened their comrade's captors in order to let them go. Eventually they carried out one of their threats, killing one of the North Bevelanders.[95]

Resistance work had to occur in a province which was geographically removed from the Netherland's heartland, and was also flat and therefore not well-suited for divers. One could not hide very well in the absence of large cities or forests, the province having only .6% of its total area in forests.[96] These forests were further depleted as "hundreds of trees were uprooted from along the roadside [to replace coal which was scarce]."[97] Further strikes against this type of work can best be seen in the context of the whole country.

> Probably no other country in Europe is so unsuited for action against an occupying military power as the Netherlands. . . . The country is flat and possesses excellent road and rail communications, with practically no inaccessible regions. While Yugoslavian and Greek partisans could always find refuge in their mountains, . . . the Dutch resistance worker was not favoured by geography. . . . He could find no other refuge than a city apartment, an attic or a basement, at best a remote farmhouse. The Germans . . . had all the advantages. . . ."[98]

While resistance was mostly pointed at the Nazis, those that were associated with them, the Dutch Nazis, were not exempt. N.S.B. members aided the Germans in their nazification attempt of the Netherlands and also helped to form the Netherlands Legion which fought for the Germans on the Leningrad front. Needless to say, this did not sit well with the Dutch as a whole and many reacted against these Dutch Nazis. In the first half of 1943 alone, forty-three N.S.B. notables were assassinated by resisters.[99] "Whenever loyal Netherlanders saw the chance, they made the lives of those 100,000 Dutch Nazis most uncomfortable."[100]

The feeling of embitterment grew more intense as each war year went by and the Germans kept taking workers to Germany and Jews to camps. In early 1943, the Germans planned to mobilize the Dutch army and send them en masse to work in the Fatherland.[101] Finally the whole country demonstrated against the German occupation forces through the general strike of 1943. In the end of April and the first few days of May, Dutch workers struck in their industrial plants and at the railway stations.[102] It took some time for word of this spontaneous strike to spread throughout the country via word-of-mouth, phone, and the underground press.

In Zeeland, reaction was comparatively light with strikes being very local in nature and taking place on various days between 29 April and 3 May. This was understandable for the province was an important defensive area housing many German troops, and possible strikers were absent since some of the population had been evacuated.[103] Munzer, in his report to Seyss-Inquart regarding the strike, said that the cause of it came from outside the province and was basically a sign of protest against the German plans of transporting people from the Netherlands to Germany. Repercussions in Zeeland were not as severe as they were nationally since many workers went back to their tasks once

German soldiers appeared. At the "de Schelde" works in Vlissingen, men struck at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, April 30. The Germans set up machine guns on the grounds and threatened to shoot the non-workers in front of their comrades. By Saturday, things were back to normal at this firm.[104] The situation was similar at the electrical works.[105] Only in such secluded spots as North-Beveland, an island its inhabitants call "Little England" did the strike manage to last longer than in other parts of the province. This was due to a lack of soldiers on the island, and to the lack of N.S.B. informers.[106]

After the British and Canadian armies swept into Belgium, the Dutch government in London ordered the second railway strike on 17 September 1944. This was the day airborne troops were dropped in various spots of occupied Netherlands, in operation "Marketgarden". The strike, although a blow to German prestige, hurt the Dutch more than the Germans for it helped intensify the hunger winter of 1944-45 and resulted in "an elaborate plunder of rolling stock and other materials" by the Germans.[107] With liberation close at hand, Zeeland was not seriously affected by this strike which lasted until the end of the war in other parts of the country.

In 1942, as part of the defense preparations against an Allied invasion, the Germans ordered thousands of residents to evacuate areas where German fortifications were to be built. Many left the coastal areas on Walcheren and some of their homes were destroyed to make room for the fortifications known as the Atlantic Wall.[108] The evacuation which started on the 10th of August was finished five days later and during that time 10,418 persons were evacuated out of the province.[109]

For that whole area of defence, Hitler had 'Organization Todt' created "to work to build an impregnable defence line along the entire 1500 mile coastline of Holland, Belgium, and France."[110] This building project gave rise to 9,671 bunkers, gunsites, command posts and other such centres from the border of France to and including the Netherlands. In the Netherlands alone 29,495 cubic metres of concrete were poured and 353.75 tonnes of bar and soffit steel used to shore up the defence.[111] Along with bunkers and other obstacles, Zeeland contributed more than one million 'Rommel asparagus' to this defense.[112] These were steel and wooden poles which were driven into the shoreline and seabed to protect the area from Allied plane landings, especially of gliders.[113] Their other function, especially out in the

water, was to stand firm and hold either strands of barbed wire to make the obtaining of the shoreline from landing boats an impossibility, or to hold explosives which would detonate as soon as the pole was moved by man or boat. With its huge concrete bastions and large guns pointing out to sea, manned by both army and navy personnel, this defensive line certainly appeared to be a formidable obstacle for anyone attempting to land in or near Zeeland.

The wall was built by Germans and non-Germans alike. A Dutch worker on the project quoted many years later in the province's newspaper said, "The construction of the most essential and secret projects were done by the Germans themselves."[114] German civilians and engineers were joined by German soldiers in its construction. "A weekend report for the week 27 March 1943 by the 65 Division stated that 1,544 mines were laid in Zeeland, 531 meters of anti-tank ditches dug and 98 meters of tank barricades were built and erected,"[115] all for the cause of preventing a probable invasion. German personnel could not keep up with the building demands and thus hired volunteers to work for them. Some Dutch labourers had already voluntarily worked for the Germans building air-strips in Belgium and northern France, as early as August 1940.[116] As the need for labour on this

wall became acute, the German army conscripted civilians who did not have a steady full-time job in their country into helping with the construction. The Dutch historian L. de Jong has written that Zeeland was the first province where the Germans forced the population to help them excavate and dig in preparation for the wall's construction.[117] By the early part of 1944 women as well as men were being employed to excavate and to help place 'Rommel asparagus'.

Working conditions under German sentries were not ideal, especially if one did not come to work when the Germans called you up. If caught for not volunteering, you were placed in a 'punishment-camp' in Oost-Souburg on Walcheren for four to six weeks. Here you were given a brush cut, received a meagre lunchtime meal, and forced to do heavy labour.[118] This camp was closed 10 June 1944 and interns were moved to Bergen op Zoom where they were freed by the inhabitants. For all workers, the only comforting sight was in seeing a German soldier doing some of the dirty work as well. Sometimes the Germans paid wages but this was not the practice to those who were not N.S.B.ers. Those who were obtained special privileges from the Germans. They were given extra food and money, or were given special permits to attend such things as the bioscope (movie theatre).[119] The

Reich used indigenous construction firms from the conquered countries to help, and from the Netherlands there were 40-50,000 Dutch working on the wall. Yet even with all this, time and resources were just too few in quantity.

The 1500 mile long continuous wall did not become a reality, neither did it prevent an Allied invasion. Yet Hitler was not going to give up on his dream. Certain sections of the wall were to become fortresses which would hold up the Allies as they pursued the German armies towards Germany. In a discussion with another German officer, Hitler said,

> We must be clear with each other Jodl, which places do we want to hold under all circumstances because they provide additional supply possibilities for the enemy? We cannot throw away the harbours that can keep the enemy from having unlimited manpower and material at his disposal. Thus, if the enemy is no longer able to get a number of productive ports, then that is about the only brake we can put on his already unlimited possibilites for movement. . . .[120]

Hitler's Commander in Chief West, Gerd von Rundstedt, did not particularly like Hitler's line of reasoning and wanted to evacuate the whole Scheldt area. "But as von Rundstedt might have guessed, Hitler, who had insisted on much less valuable positions being held to the last, would have none of it."[121] Hitler, seeing the potential of a "Scheldt fortress" as a set-back to the Allied use of Antwerp, ordered parts of the 15th Army to this area, knowing full well that they would be lost in the fighting. He had made up his mind "that a certain number of troops are simply going to have to be sacrificed to save others."[122] Hitler then went about making this fortress a reality.

Those sections most in danger of an Allied invasion were to be built up first and these were "the major harbours, the U-boat bases, and the mouths of large rivers."[123] The mouth of the Scheldt fell into that latter group and began to be built up after Hitler's September 4 directive:

> Because of the breakthrough of enemy tank forces towards Antwerp, it has become very important for the further progress of the war to hold the fortresses of Boulogne and Dunkirk . . . Walcheren Island with Flushing harbour, the bridgehead at Antwerp. . . . The

> defensive strength of the fortresses is to be increased by means of additional ammunition supplies from the supplies of the 15th Army, especially anti-tank ammunition by bringing up all kinds from the country, and by evacuating the entire population. The commanders . . . of Walcheren Island receive the same authority as a fortress commander. . . .[124]

The 15th Army--Hitler's anti-invasion army-- was to play this sacrificial role, and without a great deal of outside help for on the 3rd and 4th of September, the Kriegsmarine evacuated depots in Vlissingen and blew up machinery. The Luftwaffe likewise destroyed their installations throughout the southern Netherlands.[125] German citizens also fled taking with them cars and jewellery confiscated from the Dutch, leaving the 15th Army to stand alone.[126]

Hitler's directive was followed and the 15th Army commander, General Gustav Von Zangen, set about formulating the logistics of it. Von Zangen assumed control of the whole southwestern sector of the Netherlands and set up three divisions in the Scheldt area. Each division was, because of the fortress order, directly subordinate to the 15th Army and not to corps headquarters. The 245th Infantry Division was

on the South Beveland peninsula but would not see much action here as it was moved to another theatre in short time. Its area was taken over by the 70th Infantry Division under General Wilhelm Daser. Daser had a division of three regiments with a troop strength of nearly 7,500 men to guard South Beveland and Walcheren. The third division, the 64th, was under the leadership of Major-General Kurt Eberding and was located in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. This division best shows how Hitler's directive was carried out.[127]

Major-General Eberding, "the strict but just general" and his "good" division[128] had their power enhanced by supplies handed over to them by the retreating 15th Army. The division, right before the outbreak of battle, had roughly 11,000 officers and men,[129] 500 mortars and machine guns, 200 anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns of which twenty-three were the dreaded 88's, and several artillery pieces which were at least of 75 mm calibre or larger. This vast supply cache was given to the 64th Division, a newly formed division which consisted chiefly of experienced soldiers who were on leave from the Russian front. The Canadians would now meet this division which had been specifically selected for the defence task at hand.[130]

Chapter 3: Bringing War Closer -- Fighting on the Borders

> Today, on D plus 95, almost the whole of northern France has been liberated as have substantial parts of Belgium. Our forces have entered Holland and are close to the German frontier at more than one point . . . . The hostile occupation in force of the Dutch islands at the mouth of the Scheldt is certain to delay the utilization of Antwerp as a port and will thus initially influence the full development of our strategy.[1]

On 4 September 1944, General Dempsey's Second British Army had captured intact, Antwerp, the greatest port in northwest Europe. The Allies had already captured other ports on the coast such as Le Havre, Brest, Cherbourg and Dieppe, and had their artificial ports which they had constructed, off the beaches at Arromanches in Normandy. The handling capacity of each though, was small in comparison to Antwerp's handling capacity of 40,000 tons of cargo per day, due to her twenty-eight and a half miles of docks.[2] Each port as well made for fairly long supply lines to the Allied

army. With the capture of this "vast, undamaged dock practically in the backyard of General Eisenhower's forces"[3] would come a 300 mile shortening of supply routes and the potential to build up forces to feed a main Allied drive that would go deep into the heartland of Nazi Germany as soon as was possible.

The port of Antwerp had been eyed covetously by the Allies even before the landings in Normandy, and when it fell into their hands on D-day plus 90 there was cause for celebration by both soldier and civilian alike. Although the port had fallen on 4 September, celebration was premature,[4] for it was not until 9 November that German resistance was squashed along the banks of the Scheldt river, allowing for the opening of the approach to Antwerp to Allied convoys. Under the directives of operation "Calendar", the forty-five to fifty miles of river leading to Antwerp was swept for mines and then, only on the 28th of November did the first Allied convoy reach the large Belgian city. The celebration of the 4th at obtaining this great port with its many facilities intact and at little cost to the Allies quickly gave way to reality and to the real fighting -- clearing the Germans from along the banks so that the port could be used. This then would be "the Battle of the Scheldt."

Over 100,000 German troops were in the Scheldt estuary sacrificing their lives, as Hitler put it, to prevent the Allied take-over of Antwerp.[5] They succeeded in making it very difficult for the Allies to gain control of the Scheldt area and in making life difficult for Zeeland's civilian population. Two things which further aided the Germans in lengthening their hold on the Scheldt estuary were the topography of the land in the western part of Zeeland, and secondly, operation "Marketgarden".

The German's fortifications of this area were greatly aided by the natural lay of the land. The land was flat and below sea level except for the series of dikes which held back the sea. A few of the polders, that land between the dikes, had in some instances already been flooded making truck, tank and troop movement very difficult if not impossible.[6] Those polders which were not flooded were just as hard to cross for the rains had made them soggy (the fall of 1944 was very wet) making motorized vehicle crossings impossible, and the Germans on top of the dikes made troop movement in the polders very costly. The Germans had dug fox and slit trenches into the dikes which served as excellent observation points and defense lines making their eviction all the harder. The many canals and small causeways in this

area further strengthened their defensive position as it was much easier to repel an enemy from these places than it was for the enemy to gain them. Had the Allies attacked the German troops in those early days of September, the cost and task of evicting the Germans from this area may have been a lot cheaper and easier. However, the pressing matter of operation "Marketgarden" got in the way.

The plan was executed on 17 September and in short met with much opposition from the Germans. The Allies met defeat and sustained heavy losses.[7] The operation also made planning for the First Canadian Army a nightmare. Montgomery was giving the Canadian Army orders to clean the Germans out of the coastal cities and yet at the same time he was depriving them of any priority or aid.[8] The failure of "Marketgarden" seemed to awaken Eisenhower to the Scheldt question and he again in a memo instructed Montgomery to turn his attention to the Antwerp approach problem.[9] As it was then, by the first week of October, the Germans had settled in, entrenched behind dikes and canals waiting for their attackers to come and attempt to evict them. The clearing of the Scheldt would have to be undertaken in conditions less favourable than they had been a few weeks earlier before "Marketgarden".

After the Grave-Nijmegen-Arnhem thrust was made, the clearing of the Scheldt was given first priority. A skirmish at Aachen in the first week of October made it clear that the Germans were willing to fight and that serious difficulties would be met in the clearing of the Scheldt. The effects of a strong gale on 8 October reduced materially the intake at Cherbourg and Arromanches and helped to give further priority to the Antwerp problem[10] and to a battle that was already in progress.

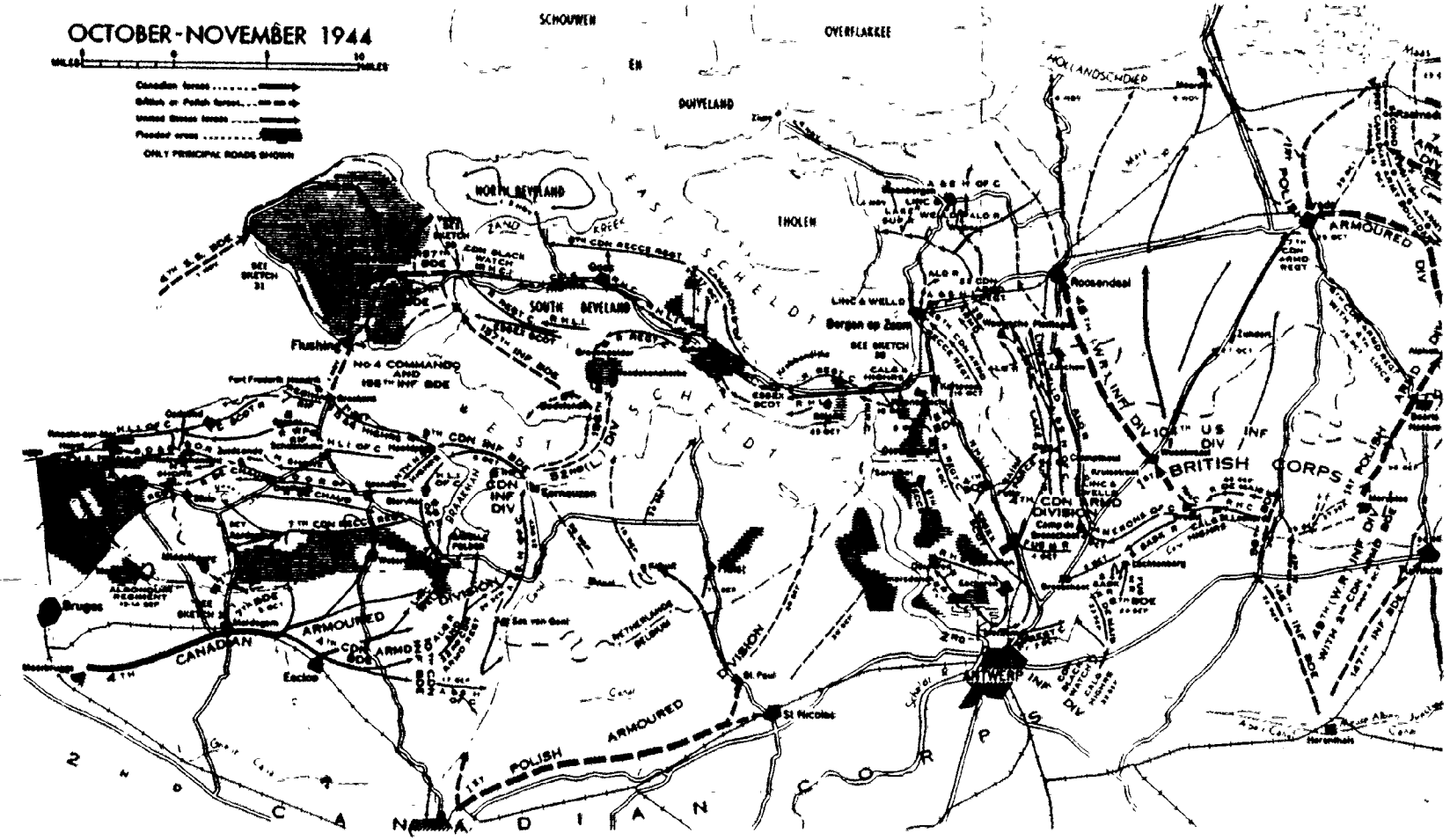
The task of evicting the Germans out of this stronghold fell to Montgomery's 21st Army Group and more specifically to the Canadian General H.D.G. (Harry) Crerar and his First Canadian Army. General Crerar had received orders to clear the Germans out of this area along the coast and he, in conjunction with his headquarters staff, drew up a plan accordingly. He, however, never got to see the execution of the four phased plan due to illness. Early in September, Crerar had to go to England to be treated for dysentry and anaemia, and when he came back to the front, the plan had been carried out successfully, and altered somewhat by his subordinate, General Guy Simonds.

To pry the German 15th Army out of this defensive shell

was a complex and an arduous task. It involved a series of co-ordinated operations by the infantry divisions, with minor support from the navy and air-force and was against those planted in highly defensible positions. This nearly two-month long job of dislodging the Germans required various intricate operations. Sadly enough, it also needed to be combined with much artillery fire, severe bombings, and the flooding of certain sections of land which would all exact a cost on not only the fighters but on those watching the fight.

Early in October, the First Canadian Army embarked on a plan consisting of a series of operations against three targets: the Breskens Pocket, South Beveland, and Walcheren. The plan was divided into four main parts.[11] The first was to push north of Antwerp and to seal off the South Beveland isthmus. Responsibility for this phase fell to the 2nd Canadian Division. The second phase was known as Operation "Switchback", and was the clearing of the Breskens Pocket, that area of land north of the Ghent Canal, and was to be done by the 3rd Canadian Division. Operation "Vitality" which would later be broken into "Vitality I" and "Vitality II" was the third phase and encompassed the clearing of the south Beveland isthmus by the 2nd Division. The last phase,

THE BATTLE OF THE SCHELDT:



SOURCE: C.P. Stacey, Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, vol. 3: The Victory Campaign (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1960), p. 424a.

known as operation "Infatuate" which was also subdivided into "I" and "II" involved the capturing of Walcheren Island. These then were the operations that the Canadians would take part in to clear the estuary. Once they were finished, the mine-sweepers could go up and down the Scheldt, setting off or gathering the many mines that were sown into the river.

The First Canadian Army had, since early September, been clearing up the channel ports in France and Belgium. The 4th Division moved along the coast and took up position in Belgium south of the Leopold Canal near Maldegem, where they saw, "for the first time the wooden shoes of the story books."[12] 2nd Division, coming under General Crocker's command took over the Antwerp sector, freeing General Dempsey up for operation "Marketgarden". The 1st Polish Armoured Division was moved from the Ghent-St. Nicholas area to the left flank of the British attack. The 4th Division remained on the Leopold Canal until the end of September when they were transferred to the area north of Antwerp, between the 2nd Division and the Polish Division.[13]

Generally speaking, before a storm breaks out, there is a period of calmness. Following the events of some of the regiments in the 4th Division, this also seemed to be the

case in the Breskens Pocket. The Algonquin Regiment on the 4th of September enjoyed a day of re-organization and rest, and during the next week enjoyed pay-day, baths, issuance of clean clothes and some travelling. Skirmishes with the enemy occured such as at Moerbrugge, but it was not until the 13th that this regiment faced the storm. It was on this day that this regiment, in conjunction with the other units of the 10th Infantry Brigade, established a bridgehead at Moerkerke.[14] Under heavy artillery and mortar fire and in the dead of night, the Algonquin Regiment crossed the Leopold Canal, being ferried over by the Lincoln and Welland Regiment. The enemy, obsessed with defending the north side of the waterway shelled the bridgehead and the command post in Moerkerke with great intensity. This defense was seen as being crucial to the Germans since, if the Canadians were victorious, the retreat of the 15th Army would be in serious jeopardy. The 15th Army, under the careful control of General Eugen-Felix Schwalbe had been retreating from Breskens and Terneuzen to Vlissingen and South Beveland, in order to make their way north of Antwerp. This retreat was necesssary to stave off possible entrapment by the Canadians in the Breskens Pocket. Thus when the Canadians established the Moerkerke bridgehead, General von und zu Gilsa, commander

of the 89 Corps, came to this theatre and gave the commander there, General Saunders, "the strictest instructions that the bridge-head must at all costs be eliminated."[15]

The Canadians had not been over to the other side for more than twelve hours when the order came from Division Headquarters to withdraw. This set-back was mainly caused by the inability to get ammunition to those in the bridgehead. A silver lining was found behind this cloud -- "consolation was derived from the terrific losses inflicted upon the enemy."[16] Withdrawal was done at great cost to equipment, much of it being left behind. Retreat also seemed to be in the form of "everyman to himself" as the Algonquins' diary states that "some of the men had to swim back" and that patrols had to go out during the day to pick "up survivors who had managed to make their way back across the canal."[17] Some never came back, being killed or taken prisoner. Total casualties for the Algonquins on this day were 148.[18]

Casualties in wartime were not a new thing, yet their high rates in this campaign causes one to notice them more than one would otherwise do. Four days after the capture of Antwerp, in the battle at Moerbrugge, one battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, "suffered

severely". In the attack at Moerkerke, "one of the Algonquin companies had had 75 per cent casualties."[19] Later on, in the battle of the causeway between South Beveland and Walcheren, the Canadian Black Watch would be almost totally decimated. It seemed as if 'the Scheldt' became a word synonymous for 'destruction'; destruction of regiments, of homes, of land.

As one reads through the war diaries of the various regiments involved in the fighting in Zeeland, one quickly notices that the diaries make frequent mention of the fact that the weather was cold, cloudy, and/or that it was raining. The author of the Lincoln and Welland Regimental diary used the headings cool, cloudy and raining, thirty-two, thirty-five, and twelve times respectively for the period 1 Sept. - 31 October, 1944. The Lake Superior Regiment's diary noted rain twenty-four times for that same period of time. At least seven of those rains were "heavy" and many of them were at night, probably compounding the soldier's discomfort, for that was when he was trying to sleep.

The fall and winter of 1944 in the Netherlands were cold and wet,[20] making conditions uncomfortable for the soldiers. The damp made one cold, the rain made things muddy, and

living in these conditions made one sick. A Canadian infantry officer in the flooded Dutch lowlands wrote the following:

> Do you know what it's like? Of course you don't. You have never slept in a hole in the ground which you have dug while someone tried to kill you . . . a hole dug as deep as you can as quick as you can. . . . It is an open grave, and yet graves don't fill up with water. They don't harbour wasps or mosquitos, and you don't feel the cold, clammy wet that goes into your marrow. . . . A trench is dug just wide enough for the shoulders, as long as the body and as deep as there is time. It may be occupied for two hours or two weeks. The next time you are near some muddy fields after a rain take a look in a ditch. That is where your man lives.[21]

An observer at Flanders in 1940 wrote of the mud there "which has no parallel on any other portion of the earth's

Carriers in soft, flooded ground beside dikes in Breskens. PAC #131252

crust. It combines the general characteristics of cow dung with a marked hygroscopic quality, so that the more you mess about with it, the messier it gets."[22] The Canadian infantryman, who, by the nature of his job, had an intimate relationship with the clay and mud, earth and water, could not escape these conditions, conditions which ultimately brought about a severe case of trench foot. There were 320 cases of trench-foot reported in the week ending 15 October in the whole of north-west Europe. Four weeks later that weekly figure was up to 5,386, making for an April 1945 total of 44,728 men who had to be hospitalized for the disease.[23] Soldiers involved in this Scheldt battle also suffered from exhaustion, and minor illnesses increased in October 1944.[24] Furthermore, because "the weather remained constantly wet with temperatures in the 40°-50° F. range . . . [it was] necessary to pick up casualties immediately if the seriously wounded were to have any chance of survival."[25]

Conditions for the soldier, if not already bad enough, were further intensified by the German's deliberate destruction of Zeeland's dikes and irrigation systems. Not only would the infantry soldier walk alone in polders made too wet by nature for heavy artillery or motorized vehicles to give constant support, but he would do so in water

waist-deep due to the flooding of the land. On the 19th of September, close to the village of Philippine in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, the Lincoln and Welland Regiment found the "area flooded and the road covered to a depth of two feet." Two days later "the water in the area had risen making progress very slow."[26] The war diary for the 15th Canadian Field Regiment states that in one operation, "some mined roads, flooded areas and snipers were the chief opposition."[27] Such water-spots would be encountered throughout the campaign by both armoured and infantry divisions alike.

It was the task of the Canadian 4th Armoured Division to contain the Leopold/de la Derivation canals in late September and early October. They were also to offer, by middle October, support to the three infantry brigades of the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division in their quest for supremacy over a well locked-in enemy in the Breskens Pocket. Since the Algonquin Regiment had met with defeat in their attempt to cross the Leopold at Moerkerke, the 4th Division turned their attention west and started to clear the whole area south and west of this canal.

This operation started with the crossing of the Canal de

la Derivation de la Lys between Maldagem and Eecloo in Belgium, a point where the canal runs almost straight south to intersect the Ghent canal. Soon such places as Oost Eecloo, Bassevelde and Assende were liberated and on the evening of September 20th the troops entered Holland "and the town of Sas Van Ghent ... was the first Dutch town to be liberated by 4th Cdn. Armd Div."[28] The 10th Infantry Brigade, with the aid of the R.C.A. and the 4th Armoured Brigade, as well as Typhoons and "Rockphoons" quickly made their way up to Terneuzen. Their speed, however, did not lessen the tenacity of the German defense.

In this quest north towards the West Scheldt, heavy opposition was encountered at Philippine and Sluiskil, even though the Dutch underground was greatly aiding 4th Division's drive by giving valuable information in regards to the enemy.[29] The Germans, aided by 88 mm, AA, A/TK guns and small arms fire, exacted some heavy casualties again from the Algonquin Regiment, in one instance a whole platoon being taken prisoner.[30] In light of information received from the Dutch police, that the Germans were escaping from Philippine to Breskens and Hoofdplaat and then over to Vlissingen, this resistance is understandable.[31] Still, after a goodly amount of pressure, the enemy fell back and many were taken

prisoner, some being escorted away from the front lines by the Belgian White Brigade. The members of this Belgian resistance group were "particularly valuable as escorts for P.O.W's, a role that they played with understandable enthusiasm."[32]

Fighting was not the only means used during this course of time to get the Germans to become POW's. Propoganda broadcasts were employed by the Canadians along the Leopold Canal to convince the enemy to surrender. At two points along the Leopold, loud speakers were installed for "moral persuasion", to exhort the enemy to cease his resistance. For those Germans who were perhaps hard of hearing, division artillery showered thousands of leaflets on the enemy. One side of the pamphlet was a "safe passage conduct" to those of the enemy who would desert, "The other side, in large black letters, asked the German soldier why? after surviving five years of the war, he should die in the last week."[33] Positive response on this action was not forthcoming, at least not immediately. In fact, response was especially negative for the next day the Germans answered back with a heavy shelling.

By the 21st of September the 10th Canadian Infantry

Brigade had cleared the way up to Terneuzen. Now the enemy lay almost completely behind the Leopold Canal, for the brigade had made contact with the 1st Polish Armoured Division who had cleaned out the enemy between Axel and Antwerp, and had a day earlier entered the port of Terneuzen. To the 3rd Division would now come the task of cleaning out the German 64th Division from the Braakman, the inlet west of Terneuzen, to Zeebrugge, the northern tip of the Breskens Pocket.

The 4th Canadian Armoured Division's role changed over the next two to three weeks from one of clean-up to a static role. Positions were consolidated and firmed up, and then quickly, by the middle of October, came the orders to move. One regimental writer now summed up the new task for the whole division:

> Our role in the "Battle of Antwerp" was now clear; While the Third Division continued with the job of cleaning up the pocket on the southern bank of the Scheldt, and the Second Division prepared to clear South Beveland on the northern side of the Scheldt, we were to drive northward from Antwerp and thus complete

the process of opening up the great port for shipping.[34]

The 29th Canadian Reconnaissance Armoured Regiment started the division's move by leaving for the area north of Antwerp, Camp de Brasschaet, on the 9th of October. The Lake Superior Regiment followed on the 14th, with most other regiments arriving on the 16th and 17th. Their task in this theatre would be to move up to and take Esschen, Wouwsche Plantage, Bergen op Zoom, then the Roosendalshe Canal, and finally move right up to Hollandschdiep.

The move north towards Esschen, under the command now of 1st British Corps, started in earnest by the 20th. That morning, operation "Suitcase" started with its object being the taking of Roosendaal and the sealing off of the western flank of this peninsula. By the 22nd, Esschen was in the control of the Algonquin Regiment who found little opposition along the way, except in the woods surrounding the town. Here, the enemy held out, fighting stubbornly to a point, aided with many booby traps and mines. "So complete was the element of surprise" on the town "that 22 enemy vehicles later drove into town unaware that it was in our hands."[35] The next day the Germans subjected Esschen to heavy mortar and shell fire but it was too late. With the aid of

crocodile flame throwers and just plain slugging it out, the objectives were all fully met by the end of October. By the 21st, 4th Canadian Armoured Brigade Group had crossed the Roosendaalsche Canal, by the 24th Wouwsche Plantage had been taken, and by the 27th the Lincoln and Welland Regiment moved into and started to clean-up Bergen op Zoom.[36] The bulk of the enemy forces started to withdraw from the area north of Bergen op Zoom on the 30th, two days after the Netherland's flag was hoisted in the city by the Burgemeester and officially proclaimed liberated.[37] By the 31st and in the first four days of November, Steenbergen was reached and the whole area cleared of Germans. On the last day of October, some of the troops were given a much deserved rest and some even celebrated.

> The officers of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment held a Hallowe'en banquet and dance in the Hotel de Draak. Pretty Dutch girls, members of the Local Young Ladies Bible Class, were invited and a joyous evening of entertainment was had by all.[38]

Although the task of liberating this area from Antwerp to Esschen to Steenbergen had been carried out in less than

two weeks, one should not get the impression that it was an easy task. It was not, by far. By looking at some of the particulars it becomes evident that the Allies were fighting two groups in the enemy camps. The one consisted of those who made their token fighting gestures and then gave themselves up; the other was comprised of a group of men who fought well and showed stubborn resistance to the Canadian's advances.

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada made particular note of this. "We would most likely encounter a mixed sort of opposition -- the usual fierce, fanatical rearguards" who made good use of the "flat, sandy, and heavily wooded [area], combined with pockets of weary Germans, anxious to surrender."[39] It was the former group who made the going tough. "The enemy had plenty of 88's and 75's, mortars and 20 mm A/A guns" and used the geography of the area well, sowing the area with mines and booby traps and positioning snipers well.[40] Roads were cratered, bridges blown, and extensive use was made of concrete road blocks.[41] Trip wires were present as were a few new kinds of mines which were powerful enough to turn a Churchill tank over or which allowed a certain amount of traffic to pass and then blew.[42] All of these defensive measures were craftily used

by the Germans. These were coupled with the command to slow down the Allied advance and thus enemy reaction to entry into Wousche Hil and Bergen op Zoom was violent.[43]

That second group of Germans cannot easily be quantified or qualified, yet they were very real, as becomes evident by the various comments found in the war diaries. The diarist for the 29th Reconnaissance Regiment felt "that these chaps didn't seem to have much interest in fighting and were pretty glad the war was over for them."[44] A Lincoln and Welland account recalls one episode where "armed enemy parties . . . [gave themselves up to] stretcher-bearers whilst they were attending cas." It was also noted that the POW's were "very cheerful about the matter."[45] Others as well, deciding that "discretion was the better part of valour", also gave themselves up to the advancing Canadian troops.[46]

The exact number of Germans taken prisoner cannot be given although the figure was certainly high and in all cases, far too high for what the German army could afford. The quality of these POW's ranged from seventeen-year-olds to those inflicted with ulcers and were thus part of a special "stomach" division, to a various assortment of nationalities and troops. There were Russians and a Mongolian,

paratroopers and poorly-trained children.[47] All things taken into account, it seemed as if some German soldiers were tired of fighting after five years, and especially in what appeared to them now as a losing battle. As well, it appeared as if the Third Reich was running low in manpower and was filling the gaps with anyone that could don a uniform and pull a trigger. Some fought valiantly; others after short skirmishes, gave up. Both made it rough going on the Canadians in this mini-theatre and on those taking part in operations "Switchback," "Vitality" and "Infatuate".

We must now turn to the operations of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division on the south side of the Scheldt. The fighting here in the Breskens Pocket, known to the Germans as "Scheldt Fortress South" was just as fierce and costly as had been the fighting at Woensdrecht. R. W. Thompson, in his book The Eighty-five days (4 Sept.-28 Nov.), gives a very good description of the fighting conditions. Here he outlines the difficult time the 7th Brigade encountered in this area.

> The rain, driven by winds blowing half a gale, had seemed to join the dark evil sky to the dark evil land, so that the small space that

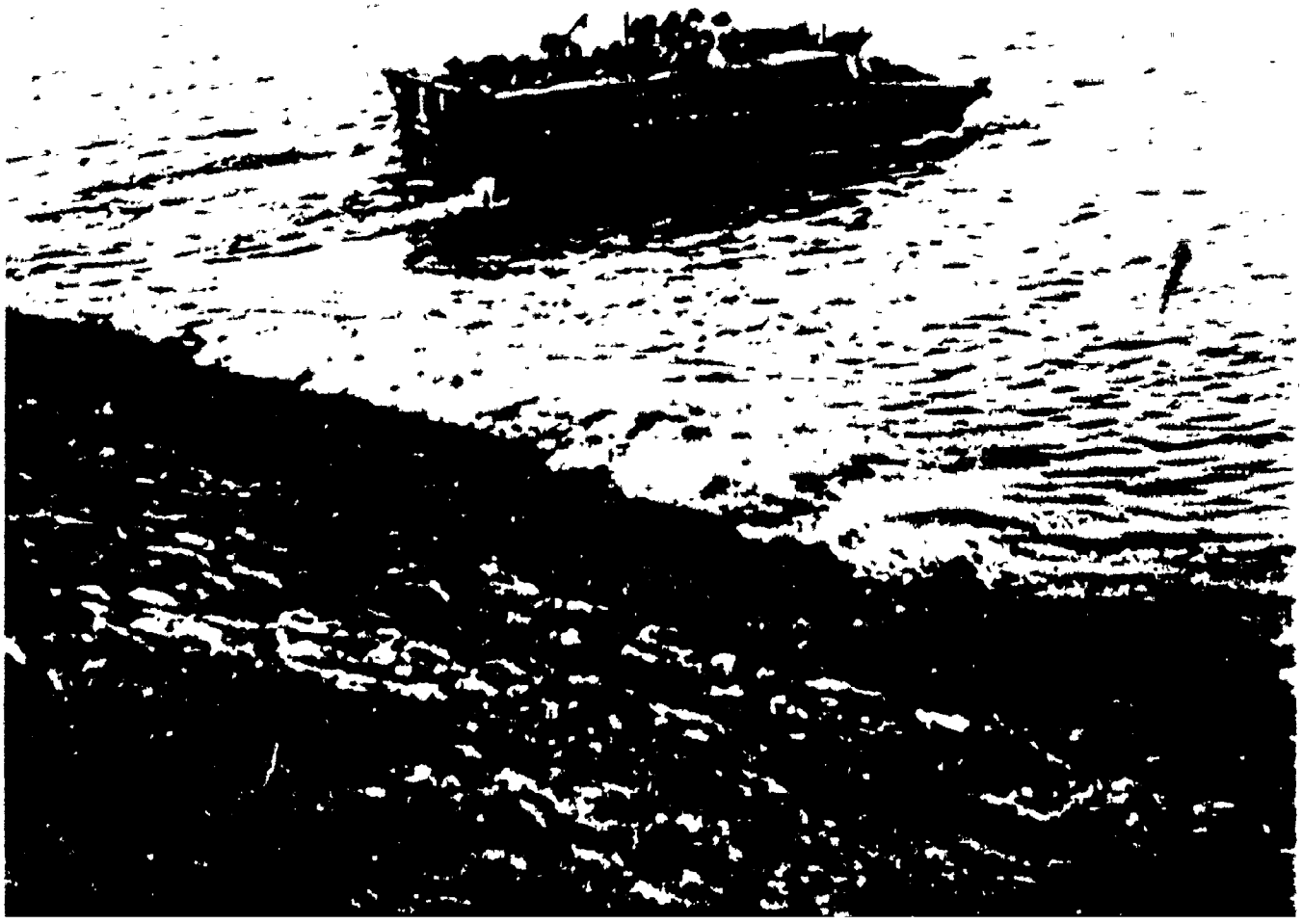
> had been won resembled the inside of a tureen, squelching with mud and water like some foul stew. Even the dykes had lost their lines, crushed and churned into the great muck heap of the featureless wilderness. There were no fires, there was no rest. For a full week men had lived and died and slept always wet and caked with ooze...[sic] Enemy bodies rotted and stank where they had fallen, of less account than the swollen carcasses of oxen with the legs sprouting stiffly upwards, symbols of the misery of that terrible land reclaimed from the sea. When Eede was at last won the land ahead was strewn thickly with mines. Hidden wires touched off explosions of mud shot through with fragments of steel. Men lost their feet as they crawled along under the dyke banks and sat staring at the shattered stumps.[48]

On October 6 at 5:30 a.m. the 3rd Division attacked at various points over the Leopold Canal. They suffered heavy casualties but so did the Germans who lost an estimated fifteen hundred men.[49] Four days after the initial assault

the German 64th Division let up on knocking out the Allied bridgeheads at Strooiburg and Aardenburg for a new threat to their defence system had arrived behind them at Hoofdplaat.

The original plan Crerar and his H.Q. staff had drawn up called for the setting up of bridgeheads over the Leopold Canal and then to pass other brigades through these holes in the German defense. General Simonds saw that if the plan was strictly adhered to, the number of casualties would be extremely high. Thus he decided on a bold amphibious attack across the Braakman, a move that helped the Allies break the German defense system quicker than could otherwise have been expected.

The 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade had obtained many amphibious tracked landing vehicles (LVT's) such as 'terrapins' and 'buffaloes' from Ghent. These vehicles were sailed up the Ghent-Terneuzen Canal and in the early hours of 9 October were used to make an attack on the beaches near Hoofdplaat. Landing occured at 2:05 a.m. on the beaches marked beforehand by coloured smoke from shells fired from their own artillery. The opposition's gunfire remained quiet until dawn when heavy shells then began to arrive from Breskens and Vlissingen. Ground gained was costly but



headway was slowly made. The task became somewhat easier when the Germans were forced to retreat at Watervliet on 10 October due to the actions of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and at the Isabella Polder where the Queens Own Rifles, coming in from the north, and the Algonquin Regiment, coming from the south, met together, forcing a break south of the Braakman in the enemy defenses.

Meanwhile, progress was also being made by those who led the initial assault across the Leopold. Aardenburg and Middelbourg were taken on October 19. By mid-October, after nearly a fortnight of fighting, the Canadian troops had gained half of the Breskens Pocket. The Germans had been forced back to a second line of defence which ran from the Leopold Canal to the Sluis Canal, up through Sluis, Oostburg, Schoondijke, and up to Breskens. The Canadians would now have to evict the Germans from this new defensive line.

The attack on Breskens started on October 21 with the Canadian troops swimming the icy waters of a twenty-five foot wide, four and a half mile long anti-tank ditch which surrounded the city.[50] They then stormed the city and, with "the co-op[eration] and effective sp [support] rendered by the Air Force" (R.A.F. Bomber Command) who tried to silence

the guns at Vlissingen, Breskens fell the same day.[51] The forces pushed on to Fort Frederick Hendrik and three times the Canadians stormed the fort only to have it recaptured by the Germans. The fourth time it stayed in Canadian hands.[52] Another Canadian force had meanwhile attacked Schondijke which fell on October 24. Oostburg was taken on the 28th and a day later Zuidzande fell. The Canadians had now pushed General Eberding's remaining German troops into the water-logged pocket near Zeebrugge and on November 2, he and his troops were captured. The next day the entry "was made in the operations log at Headquarters 3rd Division, 'Operation Switchback now complete;' and somebody wrote beside it, 'Thank God!' "[53] The Division had suffered over 2,000 casualties, almost one quarter of them proving to be fatal.[54]

While the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions had been clearing the Germans out of the Breskens Pocket in operation "Switchback", the 2nd Division had started to push into the South Beveland peninsula under operation "Vitality".[55] By 25 October various regiments of the 2nd Division had taken the town of Rilland. As the Canadians were approaching the Beveland Canal, operation "Vitality II" was put into action. It involved an amphibious landing by British troops of the

52nd Division in their buffaloes from Terneuzen to two beachheads across the West Scheldt north of their take-off point. This diversion weakened the German defenses by the Beveland Canal and by October 29 the British and Canadian forces linked up and then fought on, taking the whole peninsula by the end of October.

It had been a hard fight. The Germans had placed on the peninsula "four battalions of infantry, two battalions of fortress troops, and ten battalions of artillery."[56] In a week, however, the peninsula was taken yet at very high costs. By November 3, the 2nd Canadian Division was withdrawn from the battle having lost 207 officers and 3,443 men of other ranks in a little over a month of fighting.[57] With the completion of this phase the Allies now had to capture Walcheren Island where German reinforcements were arriving, for the 70th Division had retreated along the adjoining causeway under General Daser to bolster the Walcheren garrison which consisted of 3,000 troops well stocked with food and ammunitions.[58] It seemed like a formidable task.[59]

Operation "Infatuate" was the last stage and it required the Allies to capture the island of Walcheren.[60] Attempts at

getting and destroying German strongholds on the island had already been made a month earlier. General Simonds had wanted R.A.F. Bomber Command to drop bombs on the dikes holding back the water from the North Sea which would flood the saucer-shaped island. By doing this, the Allies would stand to gain many military advantages. The flooding would restrict German troop movement and would allow the Allies to make amphibious landings on the island in order to capture it. Some commanders did not favour the plan but it was given the green light, and executed on 3 October.[61] In the early afternoon of that day Bomber Command dropped bombs on the largest dike in the world (it was 25 feet high, had a 524 foot thick base and was built on basalt anchored in the sand by gigantic piles) and continued to do so throughout October. Ten major assaults were carried out on the island with between 8,000 and 9,000 tons being dropped on the dikes, German fortifications, and Germans below. The bombs forced breaches in the dikes surrounding the island in four spots inundating most of the island. Now on November 1 the Allies would attack by land and water.

Walcheren was to be attacked from three directions: from the causeway at the east end of the island; by an amphibious attack across the Scheldt at Vlissingen; and from

the gap at Westkapelle where a force would be brought in on amphibious vehicles. The latter two attacks were slated for the first of November, the former attack to be performed when the causeway was reached by the British and the Canadians. That was October 31 but no foothold could be gained on the island that night. The same night Mosquito bombers peppered Westkapelle for the early morning invasion.

The next morning the battleship "Warspite" and two 15-inch gun monitors, the "Erebus" and "Roberts" stood offshore and poured shells into the German positions at the western tip of the island. Then came the British commandos who had sailed from Ostend (Belgium) to Westkapelle. The British craft were easy targets for the enemy's big and mostly undamaged coastal guns. Many troops and 80% of the landing craft were lost. "Westkapelle would go down in history with Dieppe and Tarawa."[62]

That same day, British Commando Group No. 4 sailed from Breskens across the West Scheldt to establish a beachhead at the island's southern port of Vlissingen. Resistance was limited and by nightfall much of the city was under British control. Those attempting to get over the causeway, however, met heavy resistance from German gunfire and from the many

planted mines. Help was needed, thus the 156th and 157th Infantry brigades crossed over the Slooe Channel south of the causeway and by November 4 they had linked themselves up to the new bridgehead 500 yards into the island. It was now a question of time before the German Gibraltar fell.

A systematic advance and linking up of troops was made after November 3rd on the island. On 6 November the island's capital of Middelburg fell when the German General, Daser, surrendered.[63] On November 8, the 52nd Division reported that there was no further German resistance on the island. The remaining Germans were rounded up the next day.[64] Operation "Calendar" which had the navy clearing the Scheldt of the mines, had already commenced on 4 November and took a month to complete. The river was dredged in a few places and on November 28, the first Allied convoy sailed into the port of Antwerp.[65] Hitler now would feel the blow the loss of Antwerp would have on Germany. To him the port was so important that he again schemed to take it in his Ardennes counter-offensive. The offensive, launched in December, failed. Antwerp would stay in Allied hands until the war ended.[66]

The battle to clear the approaches to Antwerp was over

with the fall of Walcheren Island.

> With the evacuation of the last strip of territory held by the Germans around the Scheldt Estuary, the 1st. Canadian Army had completed its vital task of clearing Antwerp - one of the most resounding and far-reaching victories since D-Day. The appreciation manifested throughout the world clearly indicated the importance attributed to this particular campaign, which the Canadian Army under Lt. Gen Simonds completed well ahead of schedule.[67]

Apart from the fighting for the causeway and the direction of the battle by higher headquarters, the Canadian's share in this last stage was minimal. Yet of any group in the battle, the Canadians had seen most of the fighting. They also incurred the highest casualties. While fighting under the appalling conditions of rain, floods, and the cold, while under constant fire from the Germans who were well-entrenched in the region, the First Canadian Army had incurred nearly 13,000 casualties. 703 officers and 12,170 other ranks were either killed, wounded or missing. Of this total, 355 officers and 6,012 men of other ranks were Canadian.[68] Their

gallant fighting proved the Canadians

> to be magnificent fighters, truly magnificent. Their job along the Channel coast and clearing the Scheldt Estuary was a great military achievement for which they deserve fullest credit. It was a job that could have been done only by first-rate troops.[69]

CHAPTER FOUR: THE WAR'S AFTERMATH IN ZEELAND

"The last pin was knocked from the gate to the great port of Antwerp last week. It took one of the cruelest ship-to-shore battles of the war to finish the job."[1] The last pin was Walcheren Island and the elimination of the "last-stand" German troops there. After four years of waiting, freedom had come for the people of Zeeland; zij waren nu bevrijd (they were now liberated).

War was by no means over, it would continue for yet half a year but the Zeeuws were now free. For the next while as the Allied troops moved out, the Zeeuws would have to learn how to live again, to run affairs again, to manage--these by themselves and not under German overseers. Yes they were free, but war was by no means over. It was evident in every dead tree, every crater, every pile of rubble, for each bore the invisible placard with "WAR" written on it. Now came the time to assess the situation, to inspect the heavy damage done. With the war still going on and large-scale aid therefore an impossibility, the Zeeuws would have to do what they could; they would have to live, struggle and make do with what they had.

These defensive guns gave and received gunfire resulting in . . .

ANEFO RvO #98831

Westkapelles turning into a pile of rubble . . .

RvO #28469

German escape ships wrecked at Breskens.

Keystone Press Agency

What Zeeland had after the fighting was over was not much. Putting the damage caused by flooding aside [it will be dealt with in detail in part II] the figures depicting the province's destruction are still horrendous. In December 1939, Zeeland had a total of 70,020 dwellings. Between the period 1 May 1940 and 30 June 1945, 7,083 of these dwellings were destroyed (10.12%). The national figure of 4.18% of the homes destroyed (92,065 of the 2,200,678) partially shows how much more Zeeland paid for the cost of liberation. Zuid Holland, the number two ranking province had 6.74% of its homes ruined by war.[2] While these figures show the misery somewhat on a provincial level, one needs to look at the local levels to see misery truly exemplified for in certain villages destruction of homes ran close to 100%.

The part of the province where destruction was the greatest was West Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. It was on this area of 27,000 hectares that five million Canadian shells fell during the Scheldt battle. Of the five million shells, two million were heavy shells. If one adds to this figure the number of shells the Germans as well inflicted upon this area, one quickly sees that over 200 shells fell on each hectare in this region. Broken down further, that meant that one shell fell on every seven meter square patch.[3] And yet there were

still civilians alive to tell their story of the fighting.

Around and in every farm, village and town there was hard fighting, so severe in fact that author L.W. de Bree asked, "Would there be anywhere in the Netherlands, such a bitter struggle as for the taking of Breskens, Sluis and Cadzand?"[4] The Zeeuws population here had to live for weeks under constant artillery and air bombardment. Many of them lived in their basements without electricity and/or water. When they emerged after the fighting was over, they more often than not saw their then houses, now converted in piles of rubble, and saw "horses, cows and pigs laying around and dieing or dead."[5] Once liberated, if they were not forced to evacuate, the people could salvage or dispose of the dead livestock. Corpses as well that due to conditions had to be laid in gardens or placed under trees,[6] were now buried properly.

"West Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is frightfully destroyed; it is impossible to give a true picture . . . [of the damage]. In this land of towns and villages [where] thousands of houses are destroyed, . . . that is a catastrophe. . . ."[7] When catastrophes have passed there is usually not much left over. In the town hardest hit by the Breskens Pocket struggle, such

was indeed the case.

In the town of Breskens (population 3,200 before the war caused evacuations) there were 40,000 to 50,000 tons of debris.[8] This rubble once fashioned 807 dwelling places. Now 90% of the towns 898 homes were demolished.[9] Aardenburg, Oostburg, Schoondijke and Sluis also received heavy damage to their homes (47%,49%,43%, and 54% respectively of the homes destroyed), as did Nieuwvliet (49%), Ijzendijke (200 houses) and Biervliet (175 houses).[10] 4,000 homes in this area needed to be repaired. Further damage was meted out to the countryside where "no road, no bridge was whole anymore. . . ."[11]

Heavy gunfire and severe fighting forced many to flee to places they considered to be safer than their own home town. Inhabitants from Breskens fled to Biervliet; residents from Eede, Sint Kruis and Middelburg (Belgium) found refuge in Aardenburg. Sluis' populace was warned to evacuate through pamphlets dropped from planes and through radio messages. These warnings were not taken seriously since the people did not think that the fighting would be all that bad. Shelling and fighting went on for a month and the number of deaths here put Sluis in third spot in this part of the province.

Oostburg, in number two spot, lost 106 inhabitants.[12] Breskens lost not only the greatest number of houses but also the greatest number of people. About 600 people stayed behind in Breskens, Oostburg and Sluis and of those in Breskens, 121 were killed with another eighty wounded.[13] Altogether, of the 600, 370 residents lost their lives,[14] pushing the total number of deceased from this part of the province to 900.[15], For cattle which could not find safe places to hide, 50% perished[16] leaving 2,000 cows and some 1,200 horses behind for which stables and barns had to be found to quarter them .[17]

Across the river from Breskens lays Vlissingen, another dreadful example of war's destructive power. It was under constant attack during the war but had suffered the worst blow when it was bombarded by shells and bombs from sea and air to allow for the landings of the commando troops.[18] Most of the damage was inflicted on the city by the guns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen which threw almost 38,000 shells into the city.[19] They ruined over 1,318 houses (20%)[20] and lightly damaged the other 5,000 houses in the city. About 2,000 of these houses were unusable because they were wholly or partially in sea water,[21] which came when the dikes were bombed. Between the shelling and the sea water that came up

into the city, there was hardly a house that was left undamaged.[22]

Many in the city had left as the shellings increased, going to Middelburg or other parts of the province. Eventually, from a normal population of 23,000 the city was left with 3,000.[23] This number rose and fell in the next few months after November as non-workers were forced to evacuate and workers came in to help rebuild the city. Since there were so few homes left in Vlissingen, these were required to house the workers. Thus in order to stay in the city one needed a special stamped pass. Those not having the pass were asked to leave to places that would receive them. Should they not have a place, an address would be found for them in North or South Beveland. Those that refused to go were forcably evicted and sent even further away than the two Bevelands.[24]

While Vlissingen groaned due to the many houses she lost, Middelburg groaned as her walls attempted to house more and more refugees. Since only the outskirts of the city were flooded, and since it was a central point and not far from any other flooded area on Walcheren, it acted like a magnet to all who sought refuge. Streams of refugees from Souburg

and Vlissingen came so that by 11 October, 7,400 of them were situated in the city.[25] Soon the city of 21,000 swelled to 40,000 under adverse conditions.[26]

With the German army retreating, they needed food for their travels and in the month of September the food situation became worse.[27] As the battle crept closer to the capital, bombs blew telephone cables and gas and water lines apart. By the 20th of October, gas, water and electricity were cut off.[28] The water situation became worse as the land around the city became flooded and the salt water started to seep into the wells. That, coupled with the German destruction of pumps did not allow the town to "support the number of people who flocked to her for safety."[29] As the water situation deteriorated even further, rainwater had to be rationed with a group of three people getting a daily amount of one pail full.[30]

In the liberation battle, Middelburg lost 12% of its homes[31] and fourteen of its inhabitants plus ten refugees. This paled in comparison to the village west of it whose inhabitants had seen the destruction of their monumental dike, an object Westkapellers had kept in good repair for decades. The bombing of the dike demolished everything

behind the dike for an area of 1,000 by 700 yards.[32] It also caused the destruction of over half the homes (488 of 704 gone) and had cost the lives of many men and beast alike. Even though they were warned by radio, pamphlets, and word-of-mouth to leave, the villagers did not want to leave their village under German management. They also did not think that the bombing would be as severe as it was. When the bombers came, "whole households were surprised by the bombs and the water and went to their deaths holding each other. The windmill of Theune where 47 people, men, women and children, had hoped to find a safe hiding place, became a mass gravesite."[33] 200 citizens lost their lives (8% of the population) and Henk van Waard, in his book on Walcheren wrote that hardly one family escaped experiencing death to at least one of its members.[34]

Death made this village an intolerable place to live. Not only had 200 citizens died, but thousands of cattle and horses were killed as well by the bombing. Of the 9,800 cows, only 600 were left, and of the 2,500 horses only 20% remained alive.[35] "The reason why this place is more unbearable than so many other damaged hamlets, is the stink of the water. Westkapelle has not only become a swamp but over and above that it carries the burden of the unburied

dead."[36]

Oostkapelle, another village on Walcheren, fared just as poorly. It lost 300 houses and the remaining 120 gave refuge to 1,100 persons.[37] Veere, a village of 800 in the northern part of the island was spared any war damage and therefore became a haven to countless numbers of refugees. The large Gothic church there housed men and beast inside and outside. Inside, refugees slept on the pews while outside "under its huge arches, emergency stables have been built for bony half-starved cows. . . ."[38] The city, built on a small hill, gave refuge to evacuees and flood victims from all across the province, while the sea water coming in from her broken dike swirled all around.

Gun-fire damage in Schouwen-Duiveland, Tholen [they were flooded] and North Beveland was minimal. On South Beveland it was again more noticeable, especially around the Goes area. Rilland-Bath had forty-nine buildings ruined and its church and school building suffered damage. Other villages such as Ovezande, Driewegen, and 's Heer Arendskerke received light damage.[39] Goes was lightly shelled but its beautiful church and old townhall complete with tower went undamaged.[40] Further destruction was thwarted here as underground fighters

Refugees from Westkapelle in Veere's church, December 1944. RvO

Buffaloes in front of the church at Veere, December 1944.
RvO. # 27494

drove off German demolition squads who were going to blow the two bridges near the town.[41]

While homes were greatly damaged as can be seen from the above descriptions, mention also needs to be made of the destruction and loss of cultural and historical monuments. Homes could be rebuilt, and bomb craters could be filled in and quite easily compared to the rebuilding of centuries-old monuments. Damage to these memorials in Zeeland ran high.

> Whoever looks up Zeeuws-Vlaanderen in a school atlas, will have trouble finding a place in the western part that has not received some damage to its monuments. [In] Sluis . . . the unique town hall burned, the Reformed church . . . destroyed. . . . In Aardenburg the beautiful St. Bavo church was heavily damaged, in Oostburg more than one church was damaged, in Eede almost the whole of all the monuments were lost.[42]

In the eastern part of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, on South Beveland, on Schouwen Duivland and Walcheren, the story was the same. Beautiful works taking thousands of hours of pain-staking labour by hundreds of craftsmen over the years were gone.

They were either stolen by the Germans as was the case of many old bells, destroyed by the Germans as was the case with many church towers since they offered good observation posts to the enemy, or damaged by the Germans and Allies in their fight for supremacy in this province. Some of it would be rebuilt as was the case of the 'Lange Jan' in Middelburg where today it again breaks through the city's skyline. Others would remain only as memories of earlier times.

This survey of Zeeland has focused on the material damage inflicted on towns, villages and hamlets alike. But the damages went even further than that. People were forced to live in previously German-occupied underground bunkers while watching the sea waves ruin their homes. Damages forced men to live without conveniences and almost without such necessities as drinking water. Damages forced people to make decisions, to prioritize building and repairing schemes which always let some owners feel as if they were left out. And damages forced those in charge of the province and localities to make rules and regulations. Even though liberated, shadows of an earlier life under the Germans flittered through the Zeeuws' mind.

St. Philipsland and Tholen region underwater, 17 November 1944. PAC #131221

II: WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

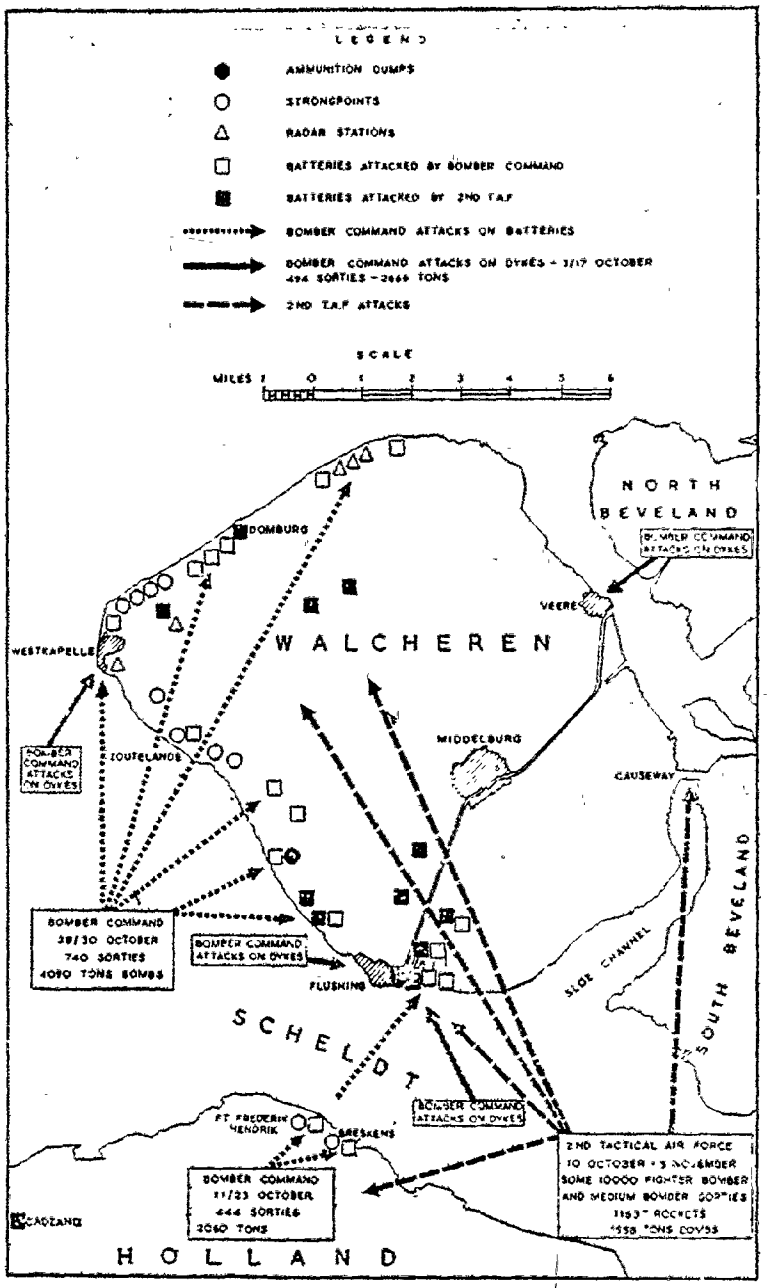
Early 1944 saw a change of face occur in the Netherlands. In 1940, in the face of danger, the Dutch had a plan to inundate certain areas of the country to impede or stop the invasion of the Netherlands by the Germans. In 1944, another invasion was to be stopped, and if not halted than impeded. That year as well, the Germans had to be evicted from the land. This time the main actors were the Germans and the Allies, and the country foreign area to both groups. While in 1940 the plan remained just that, a plan, such was not the case four years later. Out of necessity for Germans and Allies alike, the plan became reality and Dutch soil once again returned to its former owner, water--be it salt or fresh.

"Schouwen-Duiveland appeared until further along into the occupation p eriod to be the least dangerous region of Zeeland. This changed in the early part of 1944. Suddenly the Germans saw Schouwen-Duiveland as an integral part of the Atlantic Wall and at the same time as a weak link in this defense."[43] Something needed to be done to bolster this debilitated area. That something was flooding.

> The Kraut for four and a half years has filled the island with tools of war, it is poisoned with barbed wire, Rommel asparages, landmines and poles and men can hardly take a step without running into these obstacles. . . . Everywhere men sees the plague-rat coloured German uniforms--hears their language and roaring, and feels their presence and hears the noise of their artillery. How does man become their masters?[48]

The only way that the soldiers could see of becoming the Germans master was by making them immobile so that section by section they could be conquered. Immobility was to be achieved by the use of water and still more water.

The island of Walcheren, saucer-shaped and much of it below sea-level, had been given the 'honour' by General Simonds to be flooded. This was to be done by the Royal Air Force which would breach its dikes with 6,000 kg. bombs. Between 17 September to 30 October, the R.A.F. flew 2,219 sorties over the area which saw more than 10,000 bombs fall on its soil.[49] While all these did damage to the island, the ones that were dropped on the dikes ultimately caused the



AIR OPERATIONS AGAINST WALCHEREN. 3 OCTOBER–8 NOVEMBER 1944

SOURCE: Hilary St. George Saunders, The Royal Air Force, 1939-1945, vol. 3: The Fight is Won (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1954), p. 197.

most devastation.

In the early afternoon of 3 October, 247 four engined Lancaster bombers attacked Westkapelle from 6,000 feet. Starting at 2 o'clock, they dropped "their bombs at places where the dyke was thickest and where, therefore, if a breach could be made, the sea would burst in in the greatest volume and with the greatest energy."[50]

> As terrifying monsters, the R.A.F. machines circled around and repeatedly struck the heart of the dike. This continued for two and a half hours. In that time this refined technique dealt destruction to the work of many generations, the fortune of many thousands of people and the lives of countless numbers of creatures. At 4:30 the last bomber left, leaving behind a war scene of complete ruination.[51]

700,000 kilos of bombs had fallen on the nine metre high dike allowing the attack to be a success.[52] A 125 metre hole was put into the dike here, allowing the water to stream in with indomitable strength, thousands of cubic metres per minute. "But yet the water streamed in too slowly."[53]

The flooding was hastened when further sorties flew on the 7th and 11th of October. On the 7th, 122 bombers breached the dikes at Nolledijk and Ritthem, just east and west of Vlissingen respectively. Both holes were 300 metres wide. The 11th of October saw a 400 metre hole inflicted in the dike at Veere. To ensure that the stream of sea water would quickly flood the island, bombs were again dropped at Veere on the 14th and Westkapelle on the 17th. By the 18th Middelburg was encircled.

As the water started to rise in those first weeks of October, the Germans tried to get the situation into hand. When there was only a hole in the Westkapelle dike, the Germans wanted to cut off the waters from the rest of the island by having an emergency dike constructed from Zouteland, south and west of the breached dike, to Domburg, north and west. The Germans of course, asked the civilians to help. On October 5, posters went up in Middelburg asking for volunteers to come forth and help. None apparently felt motivated by the burgemeester's plea and thus the next day a new poster emerged put out by Munzer stating that all males over the age of fifteen needed to come out and help.[54] This asking for volunteers put the citizens in a dilemma. "Here man stands before a conflict of interest. If he lays dikes

then he helps the Germans in keeping their bunkers and ammunition dry; if man does not come out to help dig then the people will suffer even more. . . ."[55] When man realized that the emergency dike was to be ten kilometres long and four metres high,[56] and since there was not much to build the dike with, men stayed home. The Germans then started roundups and arrests. People that had no certificate excusing them from this work were picked up and taken to a punishment camp at Koudekerke.[57] One person was executed which forced a few to come forward to work, but on the whole, many did not answer the German's call.[58] During this time "most of the men . . . [were] still staying inside."[59] Through the opposition of the people[60] the German plans were doomed to fail. "The annoying German measures, the arrests, death sentences, in short the desperate obstinancy whereby they attempted to hold Walcheren, gave the best evidence for the military need" of inundating the island.[61]

The water on Walcheren proved to be a hinderance to the Germans. By the time the strife was over, Zeeland had 31.6% of its agricultural lands under water, as compared to the next highest province, Utrecht, with 22.9%, and the national average of 9.7%.[62] Broken down into regions, the following

hectares of land were flooded: Schouwen-Duiveland--14,645 ha.; Tholen-St. Philipsland--10,908 ha.; North Beveland--40 ha.*; South Beveland--3,383 ha.*; Walcheren--15,514 ha.*; Zeeuws-Vlaanderen--5,035 ha.+*. This made for a total of 47,477 hectares inundated by fresh and salt water.

The four major holes in the dikes allowed millions of cubic metres of water onto the island which flooded almost 16,000 hectares of Zeeland's rich farm soil. The flooding eventually led to the defeat of the Germans in the Scheldt. The Allies had indeed conquered Walcheren but then had moved on to conquer Germany. The war continued and while it "was still in progress, there could be no question of closing the gaps."[63]

As each town and village in Zeeland was becoming liberated and eventually was freed, there were various things done by Germans and Dutch alike to prepare for this. In Middelburg, the Germans were double-faced in the first few

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* These are averages of available figures from sources a-d, listed in footnote 62.

\+ These are averages of total figures from sources a and d.

+* These are averages of total figures from sources a and b.

Plain figures are from source a.

Westkapelle's gap

Low level photo taken shortly after an R.A.F. attack, shows the waters of the North Sea pouring through the breached dike.
British Official Photo RvO #60869

days of November. They gave away food and close to the military hospital they were giving away grease (vet) to the city's inhabitants. At the same time, they drove cars into the water or smashed the cars apart as was done behind the old people's home (Oude Mannen en Vrouwen huis).[64] German soldiers also readied the city's bridges for an Allied attack by wiring them with explosives.[65] In Vlissingen, workers at the boat construction firm "de Schelde" could not freely walk around the grounds since the Germans had freely planted mines all around in preparation for the Allies' visit. In the port's harbour they sank eighteen ships blocking the in-route very well.[66] Once the destruction was finished the Germans either sat and waited for the attacker or if at all possible, left.

Those soldiers that could, retreated and were joined in large part by many N.S.B. members. As early as the 4th of September, Germans and N.S.B.'ers retreated across the Scheldt from Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.[67] In Westkapelle, the mayor and an N.S.B.'er left in that month as well.[68] N.S.B.'ers in Middelburg waited until two weeks before the city was liberated before they too left.[69] Germans and N.S.B.'ers alike left on foot or took cars with chauffeurs. Many confiscated horses and wagons that were needed to bring in

the harvest or to carry furniture from out of the flooded houses. Others were even brash enough to take bikes away from evacuees even if it was loaded down with goods.[70]

As the Allies came closer to the point of liberation, the Dutch tried to establish contact with them as soon as was possible, to aid them in their task of capturing Germans. Some Dutchmen, with the interests of their city at heart, asked the Allies to stop their shelling of their city since the Germans there were willing to give up. Such was the case in Middelburg. Those in the underground passed out their rifles and their arm-bands with the word 'Orange' on them for identification purposes, waiting for the Allies to enter so that they could perform their duties.

Once the town was freed of the German yoke of oppression, the underground quickly went on an N.S.B. search. Members of this 'wrong' party were quickly locked up. In Goes, N.S.B.'ers were locked up in the exchange building (Beursgebouw). Here the work of apprehending them had been facilitated by the making up of a list of these undesirables before liberation.[71] Mayors that had been sympathetic to the Germans were put out of office if they had not already left and were replaced with temporary stand-ins until the election

process was again functioning. Others that needed to be taken were the 'moffen-meisjes', ladies who went around with the Germans. Most of them were paraded in public and had their hair shorn. In Westkapelle the drama took place on a farmer's wagon so that all could see the spectacle.[72] Lastly, hidden rifles and ammunition, and those soldiers that had donned civilian clothing had to be found by the members of the underground.

Once the individual villages and towns, and finally the province were freed, people could look about them and see rubble and water. The Dutch authorities as well as those in command of the army and its offshoot branches such as the Civil Affairs Department, quickly surmised that this was no place for man to live. And thus came the command to evacuate.[73] That word alone brought fear into people's hearts. Evacuate? After being oppressed for almost five years, after living through a hellish battle for the last few months, evacuate? We have not even had time to cry. One Zeeuws lady from Westkapelle, after she had been evacuated, penned her feelings into poem form:

> The war destroyed my parent's home and it is a bitter taste, the thought of having no home. . . . But worse, far worse than water

> and rubble is missing Walcheren's beaches and its dikes. Far worse than what terrible thing there can ever be, is going to a strange place and being a stranger. . . . How badly I want to help stop the woe. . . . But I cannot return, it chokes my throat. . . .[74]

She could not return for the authorities had seen that it would be better for the mass of people to move to other areas that were not under water or totally ruined. There they would not meet the same problems or at least not to the same degree, as those who stayed in the inundated and demolished areas.

Of a total population of 27,000 in west Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, 10,000 people had been evacuated to Belgium. Much opposition arose to these evacuation and this resulted in allowing the remaining inhabitants to stay.[75] Almost all of the 7,000 residents of Schouwen-Duiveland had left their flooded island for other parts of Zeeland and Brabant. In Walcheren, it was not until after the liberation of Middelburg that an over all evacuation plan was formulated and carried out. Since evacuations throughout the province were carried out under mostly the same conditions (the degree of these conditions varied), it would be best to focus on

just one part of Zeeland to see the terrible tolls they exacted from the Zeeuws.

The evacuation of Walcheren was to be carried out through the aid of the army, the Netherlands authorities (Militair Gezag, hereafter M.G.), and the Civil Affairs Department. After a preliminary tour of the island, it was deemed necessary to evacuate 10,000 persons. Although it appeared as if the evacuees would be better off once off the island, the troubles they encountered in the evacuation process made many Zeeuws wonder.

By the 20th of November the evacuations started. From all over the island people were brought to its central point, the city of Middelburg. A school was set up as a receiving centre for all evacuees in the capital and the following organizations were all partly reponsible for getting them there, meeting their needs there, or helping them to leave the centre.

> The 609 C.A. Detachment was responsible for supplying water; the Royal Dutch "Princess Irene" Brigade for the motor transport. . . . The Central kitchen in Middelburg was responsible for the food. The "Medical

> Welfare Unit" no. 5, which consisted of Dutchmen and was under the command of the M.G. retrieved evacuees and brought them to Middelburg.[76]

"In charge of the evacuation of civilians from this island is a small group of Netherlands Civil Affairs workers . . . [under] Maj Bokhorst . . . and together with his small group of co-workers he has assisted in getting thousands of Walcheren residents away. . . .[77] From the capital city the evacuees were then transported to South Beveland or Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, with North Beveland being a reserve depot.[78]

The first place to be evacuated was Ritthem, a village totally under water. Here two-thirds of the population (164) were taken by 'seagull', a collapsible boat, to Oost-Souburg, driven by jeep to Middelburg, and then taken to the mainland. The same modes of transportation were used to evacuate 374 persons from Meliskerke. Others, evacuated from 20 November until the middle of January 1946 were: Gripskerke-333 persons; Biggekerke-298; Vrouwenpolder-478; Oostkapelle -1,087; Serooskerke-1,000; Domburg-539; Koudekerke-734; Aagtekerke-82 making for a total of 7,000. The other 3,000 were evacuated from Middelberg via land.[79]

These evacuations were hard on the Zeeuws and on army personnel alike.[80] Travel was tiring, at times taking many hours if not days due to the round-about routes one had to take in order to ensure one's safety.[81]

> When one had to evacuate the population [from St. Laurens] before the rising flood, to Middelburg, distant only some 2 miles, one had . . . to transport the inhabitants first in "Dukws" to Serooskerke, 3 miles in the opposite direction, then to convey them, in horse carts through the rising water reaching over the wheels, to Vrouwenpolder in the North of the island, where sea-going "Buffaloes" took them across the Northern gap in the dyke, by sea, to Veere, where they first landed, to reach by ground the Veere-Middelburg canal, along which they could then reach, by safe water, Middelburg.[82]

These routes were fraught with danger. The current near the breaches in the dikes was very strong and one time, five Dukws (amphibious trucks) with 100 people onboard, were almost forced out to sea.[83] The utmost care was taken in plotting routes around known mine-fields but the tide's ebb

and flow moved mines about causing some casualties when Dukws or Terrapins struck them.

Evacuees were limited in what they could take with them. Convoys of boats like those that were used to evacuate Ritthem, consisted of a motor boat, two lifeboats, and two collapsible boats on which the baggage was stored. On these last two, man could put only what they could carry and, of that, the following needed to be included: "persoonsbewijs, distribution papers, knife, spoon, fork, cup and plate, two meals, also: warm clothes, blankets, empty mattress or covering."[84] These rules were later altered to allow evacuees to also take butchered meat, kitchen utensils, wheat and fuel.[85]

The potential for baggage problems was great. Boats could capsize or hit a mine causing the loss of personal belongings. Those who dwelled in the northern part of Walcheren were allowed to take more baggage than those in the south[86] for baggage was more easily obtained in the south and would be forwarded to its owners in South Beveland. Owners had to get their baggage ready and address it so that it could be picked up and sent to them later on. The Vrije Zeeuw highlighted such problems as address labels coming off

resulting in the delay of sending or the loss of baggage, or of workers being non-chalant in sending it on to its owners.[87]

Evacuation is a thankless task, and the Zeeuws made it a difficult one for their evacuators. "Most farmers and burghers [sic] shook their heads when Allied amphibious ducks chugged up to take them away. At Domburg only one Dutchman was willing to go. It was the same in Oostkapelle, Westkapelle, Veere and all other dikeside communities."[88] The Zeeuws were not pleased about leaving their plots and wanted to stay and make repairs to their damaged towns and farms. This feeling of wanting to stay was further intensified by the Zeeuws' religious beliefs which led many to conclude that it was God's will that this had happened and ultimately it was God's will that they should stay and endure the hardships inflicted upon them by the flooding.[89] This made their removal difficult, and the task of evacuating them one where there was "no thanks; [one where there was] . . . much exaggeration and alot of complaining."[90]

The task was also one of hard work and brought many difficulties, especially for the police when people refused to go. In Vlissingen, four families had to be forcably

removed by the "strong arm of the law". The heads of these families were locked up overnight and the families given that night to pack their belongings. The next morning all were sent, under police guard, to an evacuation centre. For the police, their image became tainted as they had to throw out one of their own. It also hurt them to do this job and the author of an article in the Vrije Zeeuw reminded people that a six year prison sentence could be in store for those who did not leave. The author then exhorted the paper's readers to obey the orders for thereby one serves one's country.[91]

Considering the Zeeuws' religious character, their unwillingness to leave their livestock or their fore-father's land, and their desire to nurse by their presence or to fix where possible their homes and barns, their reluctance to leave is understandable. It was further increased by the fear of theft. Theft was occuring in the flooded areas and the author of the article "Waterpolitie" felt that over and above the efforts of the police, army personnel, and M.G., a new police force should be created to control possible stealing. The article went so far as to suggest that these police be given speed boats and guns and should even shoot to injure, just to protect property.[92]

Once evacuated to South Beveland, groups of evacuees who had not found a place to stay were grouped together according to their village. This was an attempt to alleviate 'home-sickness' and to allow people to hang on to commonalities in a strange area. The Salvation Army also offered a valuable service to make people feel welcome and to give them a sense of belonging to the area. In Goes, at the Salvation Army hall, a night was arranged to allow evacuees to meet and talk with each other. Residents of the town were encouraged to help out with music, song and stories to make the evening a success. It was hoped that these gatherings would be bright spots in dark times for the evacuees (Mogen het voor hen licht punten zijn in een donkeren tijd).[93]

There were those that were required to stay on Walcheren due to their occupations and the services they could thereby render. Others managed to slip back to the island after having been evacuated. Still others had managed to escape evacuation all together. All encountered or were affected by sickness and shortages, hardships and dangers, and further destruction on the island, most of this coming about as a direct consequence of the flooding.

The water and the dead unburied corpses were the

greatest potential carriers for disease, while other possible sources for various maladies came from broken sewage lines and unsanitary, crowded living conditions. In crowded Middelburg, there were over 200 cases of scabies and more than 230 of tuberculosis.[94] This latter disease was found in almost every town and village on the island. Other diseases prevelant were diptheria and typhoid. Through the efforts of the Netherland's Red Cross and the (Quaker) Friends Relief Service, campaigns were mounted to prevent outbreaks of the two afore-mentioned diseases as well as pediculosis and paratyphoid.[95]

While those that contracted the above diseases were given special and immediate attention, there were still others that needed to be cared for. There were the diabetics, the arthritic, the aged, and the pregnant who needed special attention but who did not always get it due to the shortage of nurses, of hospital beds or of medicine and medical equipment.

Hospital problems were further intensified by the shortages that plagued many Zeeuws, although special attention was always given to the hospitals. Due to the lack of coal, the provincial electrical company rationed the use of electricity. Zeeuws could not use lights from an hour

after sunrise to an hour before sunset. During the evenings when they could be used, one could not use more than two bulbs, or a total of 100 watts.[96] Those that did not have any lighting available to them through such means as gas, wind-power or electricity, were then alloted one litre of petroleum which was made available to the head of each such family.[97] Special allowances for water rations were made to hospitals and bakeries. For other institutions and for the general public, drinking water was available in limited quantities.

The land in Zeeland, both below and above water, made travelling difficult for the province's inhabitants. On Walcheren, boats and amphibious vehicles provided the only means of travel. Yet these were hard to come by, hard to manage, and very slow. They could also get stuck in bomb craters or in fences and both had to chance hitting a mine or booby trap. Travel was further complicated by a lack of direction due to the expanse of water all around, obliterating landmarks. In other parts of Zeeland, the lack of horses, cars and trucks, all confiscated or damaged by the Germans, impeded travel and repair work.

Movement on dry land throughout Zeeland was complicated

by the many mine fields which were existent here. In the whole country, there were over 5,400 minefields containing between three and four million mines, many of them in the southern part of the country. Throughout the Netherlands, three persons per day met with an accident due to their existence.[98]

The task of cleaning up bombs and mines fell to the British army authorities, specifically the Royal Engineers and special Enemy Ammunitions Control Units. These teams trained the locals in the art of removing mines and by the 23rd of November, three mine-removal gangs had been formed on Walcheren. Members in these gangs were paid f3. per day for their work if single, and f5. if married. Removal work was first carried out be the dock yards in Vlissingen, around waterfronts and near railway lines. Discontment with wages, clothing, shoes and insurance caused these gangs to go on strike and they were ultimately disbanded.[99] These men were replaced by other volunteer workers and by German prisoners of war.[100] In west Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, 29,137 mines were cleared by a group of seventy-five persons --volunteers, residents and political delinquents alike.[101]

The task of cleaning up minefields was a slow,

difficult, and extremely dangerous one. Some minefields in the province were still uncharted but more dramatic than this was the fact that mines, whether in charted or uncharted minefields, could not always be detected. Located in sand or soil at depths of one metre or deeper, the mine was not likely to blow. Areas that were deemed safe could quickly prove fatal, due to the shifting sands, and the moving around of landmines and the removal of soil by water currents.[102] Slowly but surely, however, areas around railways and near cable lines were cleared. Repairs could then be made allowing coal, gas, water and electricity to be made availabe to the Zeeuws in greater quantities.

The Zeeuws throughout the whole province but more so for those on Walcheren, were forced to live in conditions that were crowded and very uncomfortable. In Walcheren and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, due to the damage to their own houses, people were forced to lodge

> in the concrete underground dug-outs and shelters, built by the Germans. . . . One can imagine how unhealthy such living can be, day and night, in the small recesses of these icy, and humid underground shelters, which are very badly aerated and receive light only through

their narrow doors, and cannot be heated.[103] Those that did not live in the coastal regions had to stay in houses that were either partially covered in water the whole day or were covered four times a day by the tide. In these homes, the Zeeuws were forced to live in the upper floors and attics, often crowded with people, possessions and even animals.[104] It was in these houses that the women had to make their way to their slimy and wet kitchens to prepare a meal, and this some did while standing hip deep in water.[105] Just as the Germans had been cut off from each other by the water, so now were the Zeeuws.[106]

Salt water inflicted the worst toll on Zeeland. The water ate at the bricks and mortar of buildings ruining their foundation. It indiscriminately annihilated Zeeland's natural flora and fauna and brought its own life-forms to the regions that were under water.[107] The sea water as well, sterilized and poisoned the soil,[108] and on Walcheren, with each tide, it scoured the earth, carrying soil more precious than gold out to sea thereby creating large tear wounds near the breaks in the dikes. Soon the breaches assumed formidable proportions and the floodings became worse. Three islands and parts of the mainland were now underwater. The water had to be removed and soon if Zeeland was to stay the

Walcheren - war worn RvO #60349

Delivering the water ration to stranded islanders.
Official Netherlands Photo RvO #64309

"bread-basket" of the country in the post-war years.

The war, it seemed, had brought to Zeeland all of its baggage, which, when opened, was like Pandora's box --all sorts of painful and destructive things were a result. Hatred was aimed at the German and was felt as well by Dutch N.S.B. members and those who had not taken an active part in the resistance movement against their Aryan oppressors. It became visible in the acts of shaving off German girlfriends' hair, in the pummelling of captured German soldiers as they were led away. Heartache was always present as loved ones, those sacrificed in the cause of war, had to be mourned for. It was magnified as the death toll became even greater when buried mines, booby-trapped bunkers, weapons ('toys' found by children), and pilotless rockets all exacted a life from those who had the misfortune of coming in contact with them. It rested heavily on one's chest as one looked around at the rubble and water, and water and rubble.

Spring, unceasingly, brings newness to life. The winter and early spring feeling of unrest gave way to a mood of happiness throughout the Netherlands as the capitulation day dawned. 8 May 1945-- V.E. day in Europe! The fighting officially ceased and soon now the fighting forces would

return to their homelands. Some troops would stay behind and aid the Dutch 'to their feet'. In Zeeland, this process had been occuring since November 1944. But now, with the war over and the huge un-needed supply of war materials partially available, as well as the aid of various groups, the Zeeuws could truly rebuild. Now would come the task of 'emergo'--emerging from the flooded polders and the inundated land. The German yoke of oppression was traded in and the new yoke of physical labour was shouldered by the Zeeuws. Now, all efforts would go, first of all, into the task of making Zeeland dry again.

III: Closing the Gaps

"The very war which had brought this disaster upon Walcheren also provided the means of remedying it."[109] By flooding this island, the Allies had taken away the Walcherener's life; with the Germans defeated, they could now give it back again. They could make trucks available to carry the required materials necessary for the closing of the dikes. The Allies could procure the dredges and suction pumps, the boats and caissons, and other left-over war materials, to help the Walcherener's cause. These materials, used in conjunction with goods and aid from many national and

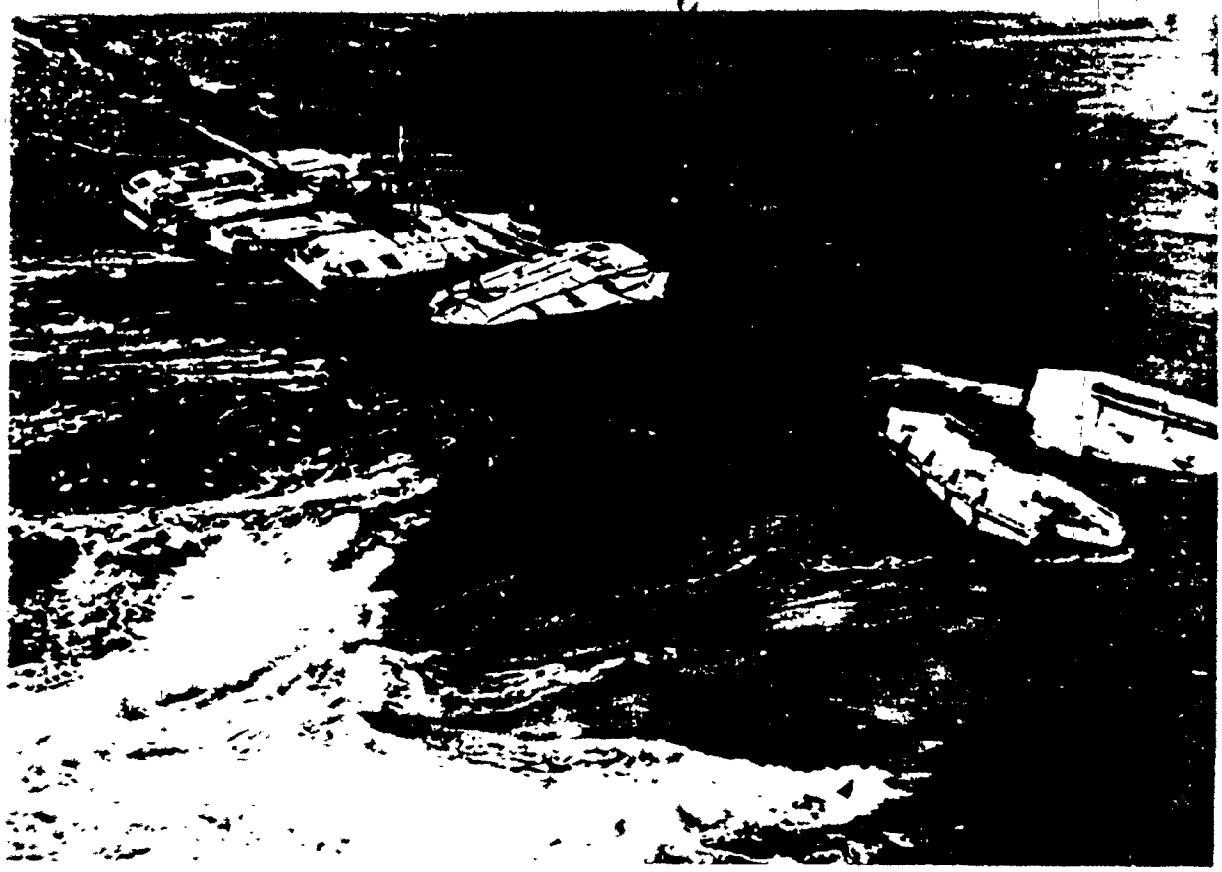
international organizations would allow Walcheren to become 'dry' much quicker than had been anticipated.

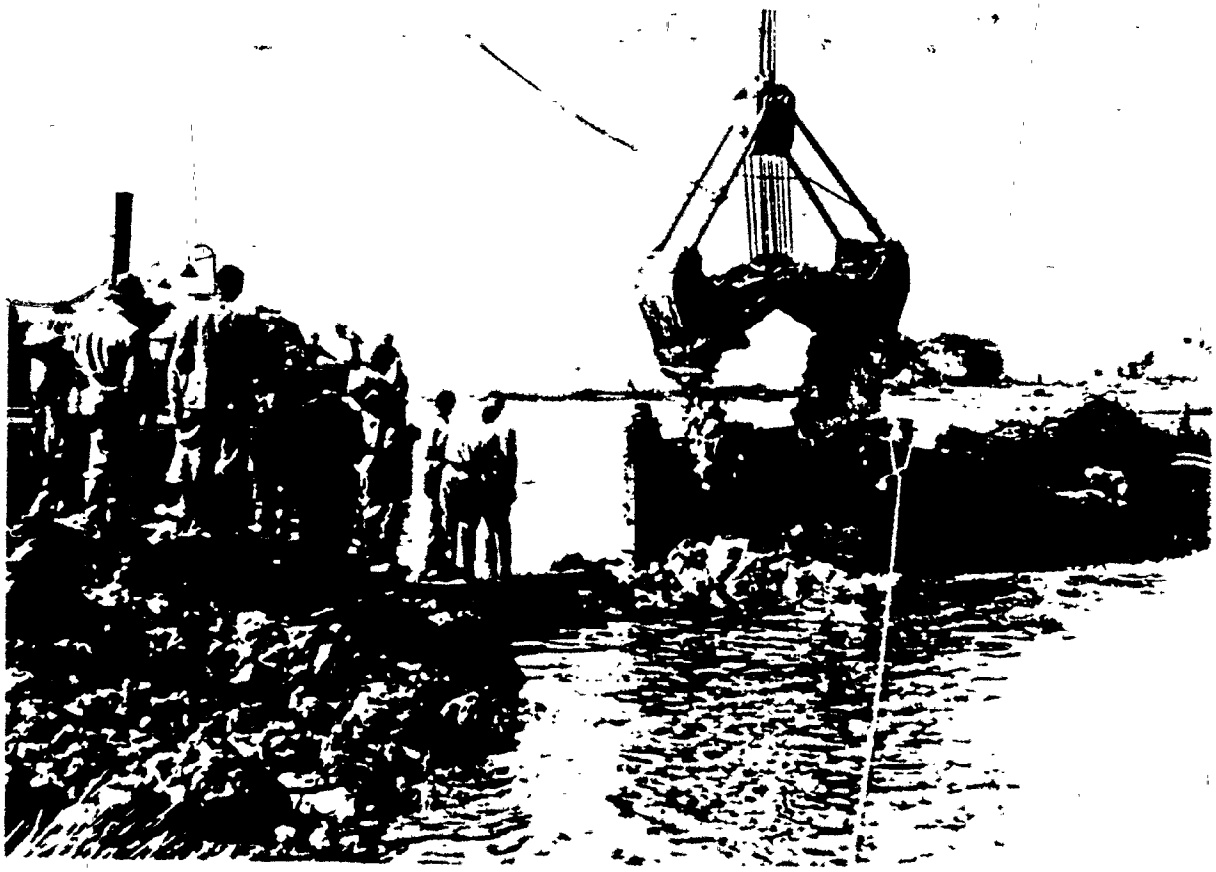
The Zeeuws had not been idle after November 1944; they had not sat around waiting for aid. Materials could not come yet but they could ensure that they would come as soon as was possible. Arrangements were made with the Belgian government for a sizeable credit so that the Netherlands could later pay back the cost of thousands of tons of stone it would receive from this country, stone which would be thrown into the breaches. Rijshout (brushwood) was ordered from Brabant, necessary in the construction of the large willow mats that covered the sea-floor and prevented the current from scouring the sea-bottom. Dredging equipment was ordered from the Belgians and the English, and from the Americans the Dutch ordered 200 pumps "capable of spewing 3,500,000 gallons of water a minute into the sea or into drainage canals."[110] And still the Zeeuws did more. Between their liberation and that of their country, they had gone on the defensive against the sea, trying to prevent it from taking more of the dikes and the soil. Man and boy alike strengthened dikes where they could, piling rubble here and pounding support stakes into the dikes there. Most had to walk a fair distance to work, working in all sorts of weather

conditions and in attire not suitable for dike repair.[111]

As time went on and aid increased,[112] the Zeeuws could start closing Walcheren's four gaps which had, over time, increased in size and the current streaming through them had done much damage to the land. By early May 1945, the breaches were the following sizes: Nolledyke --350 m.; Veere --975 m.; Westkapelle --600 m.; Rammekens --750 m.[113] These enormous gaps in the dikes allowed great quantities of water to enter and exit with each high and low tide. For a single spring-tide, 5,000 million gallons entered through the Nolledyke breach at high tide, and 2,200 million gallons streamed out every low tide. For Veere, 3,000 million gallons came in and 6,000 went out. At Westkapelle, 600 million gallons entered and 400 million gallons left through the breach. At the fourth gap, Rammekens, 5,500 million gallons both flowed in and out at high and low tides.[114] "In the neighbourhood of the dykebursts creeks were formed by the streaming water, sometimes 80 feet deep and hundreds of yards wide" destroying, seriously damaging, or carrying away farms, roads, and soil.[115]

Once the war was over, full attention was given to the closing of these gaps. By June 1945, "the powerful dredging





Top: Sinking the casemates to plug the breach. Photo Anafo

Bottom: Closing the Nolledijk. RvO

fleet belonging to the Association of Contractors . . . sailed out to the southwest to save the island of Walcheren. . . . Soon there were no fewer than 312 units of floating equipment at work" on the dikes, from tugboats to draglines, from floating cranes to landing craft.[116] The Zeeuws had the desire to see their land dry again. This desire, aided by these various pieces of equipment, would in a year of hard-struggling, bear fruit.[117]

> I cannot tell you the story of the closing of each of them, but in a few words let me tell you how the gap in the Nolledijk [the first work started], Northwest of Flushing, was closed.
>
> 20th July : gap still 160 yards. wide,
> 27th July : gap again 180 yards. wide,
> 9th August: gap still 150 yards. wide,
> 10th August: gap again 190 yards. wide,
> 21st August: gap still 50 yards. wide,
> 22nd August: gap still 30 yards. wide (morning),
> 22nd August: gap again 70 yards. wide (evening),
> 2nd Sept. : Nolledijk closed,
> 25th Sept. : Nolledijk collapses again,
> 2nd Oct. : Nolledijk closed again.
>
> Can you imagine what is hidden behind this summing up in the form of battle and endurance? May I put it thus: sweat and

tears.[118]

The other dikes were being rebuilt at the same time. Through a new practice of using filler-materials in the dikes, the Zeeuws were winning the battle. Using 'beetle' and 'Phoenix' caissons, remnants of the Mulberry harbours, the dikes were slowly closed.[119] The magnitude of operations can be seen in the materials used to close the Rammekens gap. Twenty-seven 'beetles', two concrete ships, one steel ship, two intermediate pontoons, and two 'Phoenix' caissons were the elements that were sunk in this gap. To aid in these sinkings and with the sinking of stone and mats there were: three transit cranes, six sandpump dredgers, forty-two elevator barges, two over-turning barges, two Landing Craft Tanks, fourteen bottom-dump barges, thirty-three flush-decked barges, and thirty-six tugboats. Helping out on land were two bulldozers, twenty dumping carts with locomotives, many trucks, and the around-the-clock hard work of countless numbers of dedicated men.[120]

October, the month of bombings in 1944, became the month of jubilation in 1945 as the breaches in the dikes were closed. Nolledyke was permanently closed on 2 October, the gap at Westkapelle on the 12th, and the breach at Veere on

the 23rd.[121]. The struggle for Walcheren was over. Walcheren, the island flooded for Europe's liberation, now emerged out of the water as the mighty lion on the provincial crest shows. The province had struggled and by 1946 had emerged from its life-long enemy, the sea. Now would come the time of rebuilding, of arighting the heavy and horrible damage meted out on the Zeeuws by the Allies and Germans alike, in World War II.

Chapter Five--Conclusion: "Worsteling" and Coming Up

The Zeeuws had paid a terrible price for their, and indirectly Europe's, freedom, yet their spirits never faltered. They went about their business of reconstruction with unfaltering steps, even though there was an acute shortage of everything; building materials, trucks, tools, work clothing. A shopping list of required materials for the province listed such needs as 166 tons of cement, 31,200 kg of nails, 83,200m^2 of window-glass, 41,600 kg of putty and 1,716,000 bricks to help the rebuilding process.[1] Rust, Germans soldiers, and rats had damaged tools and vehicles and yet the Zeeuws kept forging ahead, their mighty work evident in the amazing way the dikes were quickly closed.[2]

It seemed as if this spirit of struggling and emerging affected things around them, for the year after Walcheren was dry, she already reaped a meagre crop. The many authors that wrote of the events in those October-November 1944 days all believed that the province's land would take years to recuperate from the effects of the salt water. Why, it had taken five years for the soil in South Beveland to become fit for cultivation after a 1906 flood.[3] And yet in 1946, 10,070 ha of Walcheren's land was sown with and grew barley, oats,

wheat, fodder beets, alfalfa, red clover and other hardy, salt-resiliant crops.[4] The list of items the Zeeuws put to use to repair their homes and farms further spoke of willing hands.

The Zeeuws were faced with shortages. "The greatest handicap to the Dutch farmer is the shortage of machinery for soil cultivation", all of these being taken to Germany or else they were so dilapidated that they were of no use.[5] Tools, fertilizers, horses, all were scarce, but with the assistance the Zeeuws received from the Allies, they overcame circumstances and went on to conquer them. "Just now, the ailing symptoms of Dutch agriculture are like those of a wounded man who still bleeds from many wounds, but who, thanks to his strong constitution, has every chance to recover, provided he is assisted by physicians interested in his case who are able to furnish the necessary medicines."[6] The Zeeuws' recovery owed much to the Allied 'physicians'.

On the surface, war brought nothing good to Zeeland. Yet if one looks into this dark time, one can see pinpoints of light, moments where people worked together, where joy and happiness were evident and willingly given away. It was good to see divers who had hidden for years, surface again. It

was wonderful to hear the conquering Scots give a free concert or to receive mail again thanks to the efforts of the Red Cross. These times were what helped the people through the war. They bonded the Zeeuws together, making them one in resistance and now helped to keep them as one in the repair work. Unknowingly, this bond would aid them again in the not-so-distant future.

The night of January 31-February 1, 1953, was an awesome one in Dutch history. On this night, nature's forces of gravity, lunar pull, wind and water all worked together to create one of the Netherland's worst floods. The 120 km/h winds and the 12 m high waves combined to flood over 200,000 ha of land affecting 750,741 inhabitants.[7] Over 8,100 houses were totally destroyed, 38,000 more were heavily damaged, and death came to 50,000 sheep and cattle.[8] When the toll was taken, 1,800 people, of whom 633 were never found, had perished.[9]

Again the Zeeuws had to struggle and emerge. This time, however, they were bonded together. This time they knew how to fix the dikes for they had the knowledge, gleaned from seven years earlier. Under the campaign slogan, "Open your wallet--close a dike" money streamed in to help make repairs.

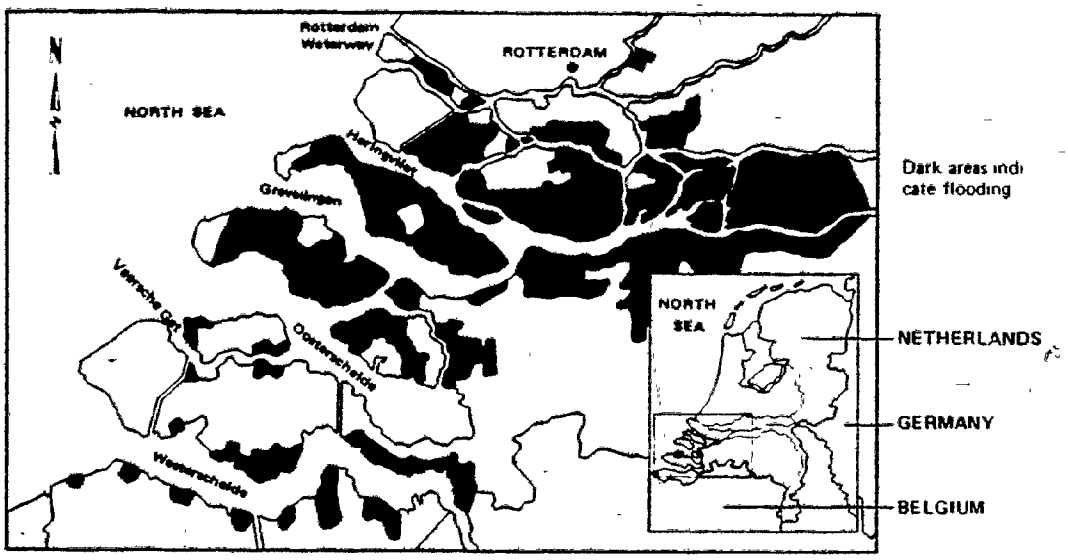


Fig. 1.1—The Delta region, southwest Netherlands, showing the flooding from the February 1953 storm and identifying the Delta estuaries

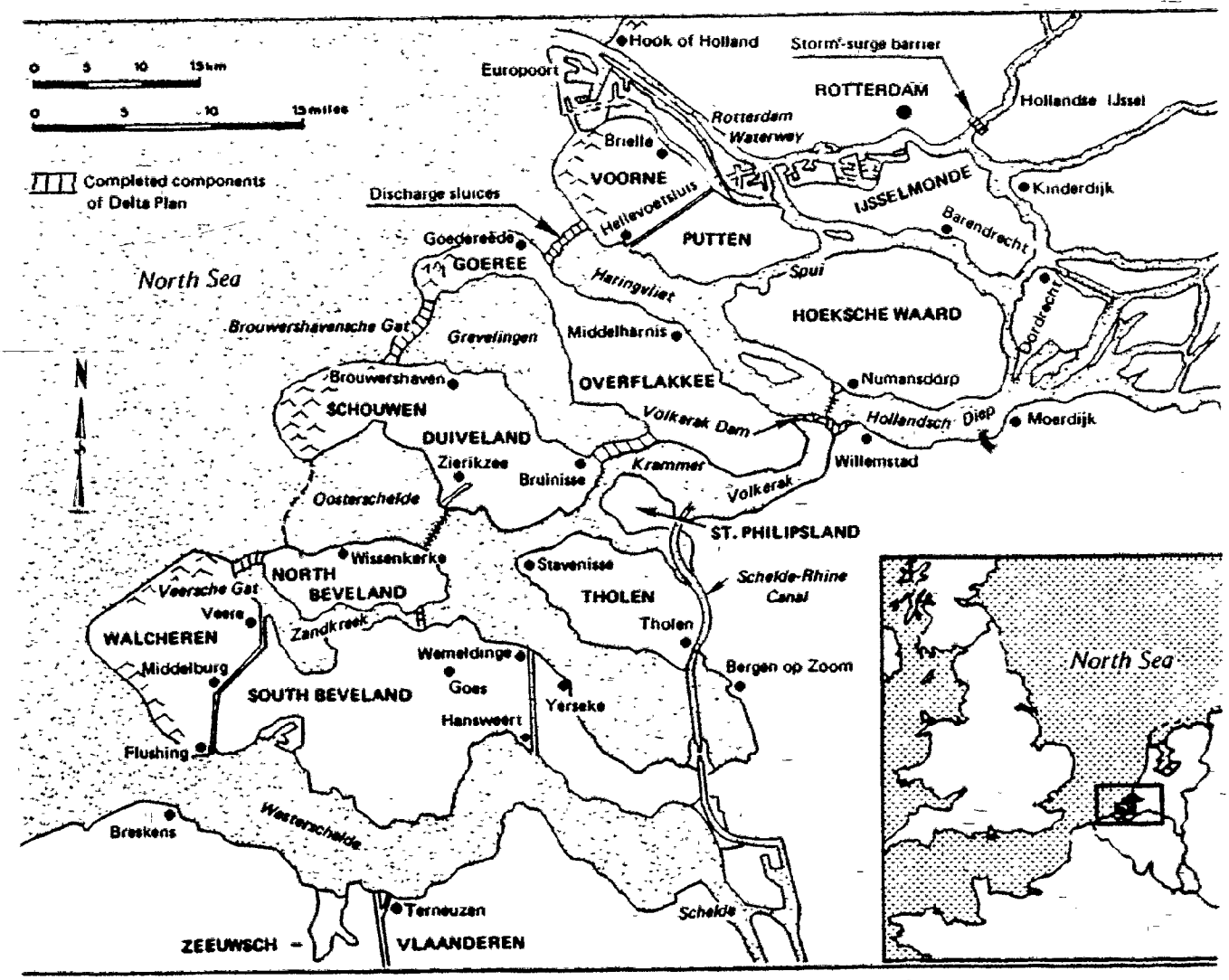


Fig. 1.2—The Delta region, southwest Netherlands, showing Delta Plan components completed by 1975

SOURCE: Rand Corporation, Protecting an Estuary From Floods, vol. 1: Summary Report, pp. 3 + 4.

The Zeeuws would again for the next few years, be busy rebuilding.

In the history of the Zeeuws, the war can be looked at as one of the many struggles they had against the sea. But it was more than that, for it affected them in a much deeper way. A flood hits and goes, leaving behind proof of its force that one can hopefully clean up. The floods of 1944 left an unsightly mess on the landscape but they were precluded by four years of living under the Germans, four years of 'living in a cage with your keeper watching every move.' The Zeeuws struggled in those May days of 1940 as they did again in 1944 and again in 1953. Each time their spirit of unity was reborn, each time they struggled and came forth. We can, by looking at them in each of these times, take heart and obtain courage. Their location inevitably means that their struggle will go on forever. "Struggle and Emerge", these words emblazoned on Zeeland's provincial crest were not an emply slogan but rather were a concise description of what it was like to be a resident of Zeeland in the time of the Second World War.

Appendix 1

Twenty-First Army Group — General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, Commander-in-Chief

First Canadian Army — General H.D.G. Crerar

1st Canadian Corps — Lt. -Gen. C. Foulkes

- 49th British Infantry Division
- 5th Canadian Armoured Division

2nd Canadian Corps — Lt. -Gen. G.G. Simonds

- Polish Armoured Division
- 2nd Canadian Infantry Division
- 3rd Canadian Infantry Division
- 4th Canadian Armoured Division

Appendix 1 (b)

2nd Infantry Division:

The Toronto Scottish Regiment (M.G.)

4th Infantry Brigade

The Royal Regiment of Canada
The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry
The Essex Scottish Regiment

5th Infantry Brigade:

The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada
Le Regiment de Maisonneuve
The Calgary Highlanders

6th Infantry Brigade:

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal
The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada
The South Saskatchewan Regiment

3rd Infantry Division:

The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (M.G.)

7th Infantry Brigade:

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles
The Regina Rifle Regiment
1st Battalion, The Canadian Scottish Regiment

8th Infantry Brigade:

The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada
Le Regiment de la Chaudiere
The North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment

9th Infantry Brigade:

The Highland Light Infantry of Canada
The Stormond, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders
The North Nova Scotia Highlanders

4th Armoured Division:

10th Infantry Brigade:

10th Independent Machine Gun Company
(The New Brunswick Rangers)
The Lincoln and Welland Regiment
The Algonquin Regiment
The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada
(Princess Louise's)
The Lake Superior Regiment (Motor)

7

Appendix 2

Aan Bewoners van de Eilanden in de Monding van de Rivier de Schelde

WAARSCHUWING

Uitgevaardigd door het Hoofdkwartier van den Opperbevelhebber van het Geallieerde Expeditieleger.

1) Het is zeer waarschijnlijk, dat de vijandelijke troepen en installaties op uwe eilanden binnenkort aan een hevig en langdurig luchtbombardement zullen blootstaan.

2) Het is de vurigste wensch van het geallieerde oppercommando dat de burgerbevolking zal worden gespaard voor de gevolgen van deze noodzakelijke militaire actie voorzoover dit eenigszins mogelijk zal zijn.

3) Niet alleen een luchtbombardement maar het gevaar van overstrooming bedreigt eveneens ons leven en dat van uwe familiën.

4) Verlaat de eilanden of indien dat niet mogelijk is, verhuist dan ONMIDDELLIJK met uwe familiën naar een veilige plaats op de eilanden.

Alle militaire doelen — wegen, kanalen, transportlijnen, krachtstations, spoorwegemplacementen of loodsen, opslagplaatsen en depots, vijandelijke concentraties van allerlei soorten zijn de middelpunten van gevaarzones : gaat ONMIDDELLIJK uit de nabijheid daarvan.

5) Reist uitsluitend te voet en neemt niets met U mee, dat U niet gemakkelijk kunt dragen. Houdt U verwijderd van de groote verkeerswegen en begeeft U uitsluitend door velden. Reist niet in groote groepen, welke ten onrechte kunnen worden aangezien voor vijandelijke formaties. Houdt U verwijderd van laagliggend grondgebied en van militaire doelen totdat de vijand van uwe eilanden is verdreven.

Pamphlets dropped from Allied planes. "To the inhabitants of the Islands in the Mouth of the River Scheldt. WARNING. Distributed by the Headquarters of the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces. . . . enemy troops and installations on your islands will shortly be exposed to a heavy and long air bombardment. . . . Leave the islands or . . . move immediately . . . to a safe place. . . ."

Appendix 3

BIJ DEN STRIJD OM DE OPENSTELLING VAN DE SCHELDEMONDING WERDEN

40.000 CANADEEZEN

GEDOOD, GEWOND OF GEVANGEN GENOMEN

WAT DEEDT GIJ VOOR UW EIGEN VADERLAND?

(OVERGENOMEN UIT DECEMBER-NUMMER VAN „TROUW")

This 'reminder' was taken from a clandestine newspaper and printed as a pamphlet (illegal) to encourage Dutchmen to do something themselves for their country. It reads, "During the battle to open the mouth of the Scheldt, 40,000 Canadians were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. What did you do for your country?"

RvO Box 20 N6.27

NOT LEGIBLE
ILLISIBLE

Openbare bekendmaking

De Burgemeester van Goes brengt [illegible] openbare kennis dat door de [illegible] bevel is gegeven dat op [illegible] September 1944 om [illegible] gemeente voorzien van [illegible] Goes aanwezig moeten zijn [illegible] richten van herstellingswerkzaamheden [illegible] Sloedam alwaar de electrische [illegible] leiding beschadigd zijn.

De heen- en terugreis naar het [illegible] in het donker per trein worden [illegible] de herstellingswerkzaamheden zelf [illegible] het donker zullen worden uitgevoerd.

Indien het vereischte aantal personen [illegible] meldt zal van de zijde van de Duitsche Weermacht tot dwangmaatregelen worden overgegaan.

Goes, 19 September 1944.

A notice from the mayor of Goes, acting on the Germans behalf, encouraging 200 persons to show up at the train station with spades in hand. They would be transported to and from the city during the early morning and late evening dark hours and would work on repairing the electric cables and the water line which were damaged. Should enough people not show up the Germans would administer the required punishments.

ENDNOTES

In citing works in the notes, short titles have generally been used. Works frequently cited have been identified by the following abbreviations:

AAPS The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

BRK Archives of the Beauftragte des Reichskommissars in der Provinz Zeeland.

dB Diary (personal) of Mr. M.P. de Bruin, resident of Middelburg

DCZD Documentatiecentrum Zeeuws Deltagebied, Middelburg (Zeeland's Delta Region Documentation Centre, located in Middelburg)

RG24 Record Group 24, National Defence 1870-1974, Public Archives of Canada (PAC)

RvO Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam

SCML Special Collection, Middelburg Library.

WD War Diaries:

A and SH of C	Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada
L and W Reg.	Lincoln and Welland Regiment
Al. Reg.	Algonquin Regiment
4th Cdn Arm'd Div.	4th Canadian Armoured Division

Chapter One

1. Great Britain Naval Intelligence Division, Geographical Handbook Series, gen. ed. H.C. Darby, BR 549: Netherlands (n.p., October 1944), p.232.

2. Ibid., p. 216.

3. Zena Stein et al, Famine and Human Development; The Dutch Hunger Winter of 1944 - 1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 39.

4. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 108

5. Ibid., pp. 78, 86.

6. Ibid., p. 24.

7. For a history on polders, see Paul Wagret, Polders, Trans. Margaret Sparks (London: Methuen and Company Limited, 1968). See the time-map, showing the polders gained in the southwest of the Netherlands by century, in Johan Van Veen, Dredge, Drain, Reclaim, 5th ed., (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 102-103.

8. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 218.

9. This can be seen in the following account: In the village of Kruiningen (population 2,619) on South Beveland, the people are so conservative that the comment was made, "You should see the people in Kruiningen look at you when you wear clogs or overalls on Sunday. They are terribly stiff there." Instituut Voor Sociaal Onderzoek Van Het Nederlandse Volk, and the Committee on Disaster Studies of the National Academy of Sciences, Studies in Holland Flood Disaster 1953, vol, 3 (c): J.E. Ellemers and Henny M. in't Veldt-Langeveld, A Study of the Destruction of a Community (Amsterdam, Washington,: By the authoring committees, 1955), p. 78.

10. Instituut Voor Sociaal Onderzoek Van Het Nederlandse Volk, and the Committee on Disaster Studies of The National Academy of Sciences, Studies in Holland Flood Disaster 1953, vol. 3(b): L.W. Nauta and P.J. Van Strien, A Study of Community Re-integration (Amsterdam, Washington,: By the authoring committees, 1955), p. 6.

11. P.J. Bouman, De April-Mei-Stakingen van 1953 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), p. 148.

12. Oosthoeks Encyclopedie, 1964 ed., s.v. "Zeeland".

13. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, pp. 91, 95.

14. See Instituut Voor Sociaal Onderzoek Van Het Nederlandse Volk, and The Committee on Disaster Studies of the National Academy of Sciences, Studies in Holland Flood Disaster 1953, vol 1: K. Van Kujk and J. Pilger, Communications in the Stricken Areas in February 1953 (Amsterdam, Washington,: By the authoring committees, 1955), pp. 6-7, for a breakdown on the occupational structure of the province.

15. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 266.

16. See the maps in Ibid., p. 267; Wagret, Polderlands, pp. 60-61.

17. Van Veen, Dredge, Drain, Reclaim, p. 18.

18. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 269.

19. Audrey M. Lambert, The Making of the Dutch Landscape: An Historical Geography of the Netherlands (London: Seminar Press, 1971), p. 225.

20. "It has been calculated that, even ignoring the reconstruction made in 1945, the Westkapelle dyke has cost since the fifteenth century the equivalent of its weight in solid silver." Wagret, Polderlands, p. 182.

21. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 273.

22. For a list of the serious floods in Zeeland and the damages they exacted, see Van Dijk and Pilger, Communications in the Stricken Areas in February 1953, page 5, Table 2.

23. J.S. Lingsma, Holland and the Delta Plan, 2nd ed., trans. C. van Amerongen (Rotterdam: Nijgh and Van Ditmar, 1964]. Most of the dikes in this plan have been completed. Some difficulties have been encountered which have slowed down construction. For these problems and an excellent technical discussion on the whole plan see B.F. Goeller et al, Protecting an Estuary from Floods -- Policy Analysis of the Oosterschelde, 6 vols. (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation for the Netherlands Rijkswaterinstituut, 1977-1978).

24. O.S.S. State Department, Intelligence and Research Reports, Part 4: Germany and its Occupied Territories During World War II, Vol. 2, "Survey of the Netherlands" (Washington: 14 July 1942, microfilm series US, DH156 77 R04, roll 19), pp. 108, 134.

25. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 444; Knickerbocker Weekly, 16 October 1944, p. 12.

26. Lambert, Making of the Dutch Landscape, p. 285; G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 445.

27. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 447; O.S.S. State Department, "Survey of the Netherlands", p. 107.

28. O.S.S. State Department, "Survey of the Netherlands", p. 108. "During the invasion in 1940 the Dutch succeeded in towing away uncompleted naval units being built by the

Scheldt Company. . . . These were later completed in England." Knickerbocker Weekly, 16 October 1944, p.12.

29. For a history on the derivation of the many place names in Zeeland such as Middelburg (middle of three highspots) see the various accounts in BRK, file 46[02], RvO.

30. Lambert, Making of the Dutch Landscape, p. 225.

31. Ibid.

Chapter Two

1. From 1937-1939, the budget went from 93 million guilders to 251 million guilders. In 1940 the airforce possessed 120 airplanes. Both increases were ineffectual in the May days of 1940. Gerald Newton, The Netherlands: An Historical and Cultural Survey, 1795-1977 (London: E. Benn), p. 123. The Dutch had plans prepared for the safeguard of their food supplies. Zena Stein et al., Famine and Human Development; The Dutch Hunger Winter of 1944-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 42.

2. Newton, The Netherlands, p. 133.

3. Walter B. Maass, The Netherlands at War: 1940:1945 (Toronto: Abelard-Schuman, 1970), p. 21.

4. Newton, The Netherlands, p. 134; Erik Hazelhoff, Soldier of Orange (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), p. 12.

5. A more detailed account of those May 1940 days and the battle can be found in Maass, The Netherlands at War, pp. 19-42; also Len Deighton, Blitzkrieg: From the Rise of Hitler to the Fall of Dunkirk, with a foreword by General W.K. Nehring (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), pp. 215-225 (maps and pictures included).

6. Malcolm J. Proudfoot, European Refugees:1939-52, A Study in Forced Population Movement (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1956), p. 48.

7. Ibid. "The flight of the Queen and the government deeply shocked both the army and the population. . . . Many Dutchmen accused her of having saved her skin and left her

people to face the enemy. This first emotion gradually passed when it was realized that a captive government would have been a great asset to the Germans." Maass, The Netherlands at War, p. 37.

8. King Leopold of Belgium surrendered May 27. Zeeuws-Vlaanderen capitulated when Belgium did. de Bree notes that in this skirmish, 115 Zeeuws were killed, and total deceased military personnel on both sides came to be between 400-500. L.W. de Bree, Zeeland: 1940-1945, (Middelburg, Zeeland: Den Boer, 1979) 1:183. This mini-battle resulted in minimal materials damage to homes, although bridges were blown, boats sunk and dike walls weakened by retreating French and Belgian forces. See Provinciaal Bestuur Van Zeeland, [no title] by P. Dieleman (Middelburg, Zeeland: 22 June 1940), BRK, 75^{02} II, RvO.

9. Werner Warmbrunn, The Dutch Under German Occupation: 1940-1945 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 27.

10. The Dutch poked fun at his name, referring to him as "zes en een kwart" implying that he was only half a man for he was only half of twelve and a half and he also limped. Seyss-Inquart was a lawyer by profession. His involvement in the Austrian Anschluss of 1938 made him a favoured man by the Fuhrer.

11. Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, p. 28. See also O.S.S. State Department, Intelligence and Research Reports, Part 4: Germany and its Occupied Territories During World War II, vol. 12, "German Military Government over Europe: The Netherlands" (Washington: 30 November 1944, microfilm series US_1DH15677R04, roll 19).

12. Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, p. 28.

13. L.W. de Bree, Zeeland 1:224.

14. Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, p. 86.

15. See Ibid., pp. 83-96.

16. Trial of the Major War Criminals (Nuremburg: International Military Tribunal, 1948), 16:35.

17. 275 of the 900 Mayors were N.S.B.'ers (30.6%). Louis de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, 10 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff,

1969-1980), 10:58.

18. For more on the N.S.B., see O.S.S. State Department, Germany and its Occupied Territories during World War II, vol. 7, "The Dutch National Socialist Party and its Para-Military Formations" (n.d.); vol. 12, "German Military Government over Europe: The Netherlands" (30 November 1944), pp. 16-24.

19. Maass, The Netherlands at War, p. 56.

20. The B.B.C. also had the news in Dutch. Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, p. 54.

21. Newton, The Netherlands, p. 143.

22. Maass, The Netherlands at War, p. 55. O.S.S. State Department, Germany and its Occupied Territories during World War II, vol. 2, "Survey of the Netherlands" (14 July 1942), p. 33, states that there were (an estimate, 1940) 1,086,513 registered sets in the country.

23. Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek, "Economische en Sociale Kalendar 1939-1945" in Economische en Sociale Kroniek der Oorloogsjaren 1940-1945 (Utrecht: W. de Haan, 1947), p. 325 (hereafter referred to as Kalendar). In Goes, 1,200 radios were given to the Germans since only a small part of the population wanted to risk keeping them. N.J. Karhof, Bezet, Verzet, Ontzet. Goes en omgeving in de bewogen jaren 1940-1945 (Goes, Zeeland: Algemeene Boekhandel J. de Jonge, [1945]), p. 33.

24. A. Korteweg tells of a fourteen-year-old boy who was caught carrying an illegal paper by the Germans. He was beaten with a stick, slapped, and put in a cell without food and water. After this torture, on the way to the punishment camp in Souburg, he escapes. See Oorlog aan de Scheldemond (Middelburg: Den Boer, 1947), pp. 40-42.

25. Mr. J. Tuinman (Zeeland resident), interview with author, Middelburg, Zeeland, 12 June 1980.

26. Great Britain Naval Intelligence Division, Geographical Handbook Series, gen. ed., H.C. Darby, BR 549: Netherlands (October 1944), p. 608.

27. O.S.S. State Department, "Survey of the Netherlands", p. 30.

28. L.E. Winkels, De Ondergrondse Pers, 1940-1945 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954), p. 403. With an English Summary.

29. Ibid., p. 406.

30. See Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, pp. 221-258. For a more in-depth study see Winkels, De Ondergrondse Pers. An anthology of articles found in the hundreds of underground papers is, R.S. Zimmermann-Wolf, ed., Het Woord Als Wapen, Keur uit de Nederlandse Ondergrondse Pers, 1940-1945 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952). With an English Summary.

31. Louis de Jong, The Lion Rampant: The Story of Holland's Resistance to the Nazis, trans. Joseph W.F. Stoppelman (New York: Querido, 1943), p. 302.

32. Ibid., p. 303.

33. Stein, Famine and Human Development, p. 43. See Kalendar for the exact dates of when various items were rationed.

34. Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek, Statistisch Zakboek 1944-1946(Utrecht: W. de Haan, 1947), pp. 96-97.

35. The Germans did distribute food on a differential rationing scheme where different groups of people such as workers or expectant mothers were alloted more of certain items and therefore calories than other groups. See Burger, Malnutrition and Starvation in the Western Netherlands (The Hague: n.p., 1948), p. 7.

36. At his trial, Seyss-Inquart said the following: "Food distribution in the Netherlands was also very carefully regulated, more so almost than in any other occupied territory." Trial of the Major War Criminals 16:13.

37. By 1944, you could not get any paint, new clothes or shoes. Matches were very difficult to come by, liquor was scarce and toilet paper was a by-gone commodity. Coffee and tea were not even distributed. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:62.

38. Maass, The Netherlands at War, p. 72.

39. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews

1933-1945 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), pp. 496-498.

40. Ibid., p. 498.

41. G.B.N.I.D., Netherlands, p. 605; see also H.C. Touw, "The Resistance of the Netherland's Churches" in AAPS 245 (May 1946): 149-161.

42. See Anne Frank, Diary of a Young Girl, trans. B.M. Mooyaart (New York: Doubleday, 1967).

43. 'A Dutch play on words: "Only by 'diving' can you keep your head above water."' H.R. de Zaaijer, "Law Enforcement" in AAPS 245 (May 1946):17.

44. Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, pp. 52-53.

45. O.S.S. State Department, "German Military Government over Europe: The Netherlands", p. 111.

46. de Bree, Zeeland 1:53.

47. Ibid., pp. 242, 304.

48. Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, p. 54.

49. Ibid., pp. 55.

50. dB, 14 September 1944.

51. dB, 9 October 1944. See Korteweg, Oorlog aan de Scheldemond, p. 132, for the poster the Germans published announcing this man's death.

52. BRK, 53^{08}, RvO, contains letters from burgemeesters written in June and July 1942, telling the Germans whether or not they had people in their district join the N.A.F. -- Niederlandischen Arbietsfront. Further evidence of German control in this area can be seen in the reports located in file 53^{06} showing the number of unemployed in each district in Zeeland for certain years.

53. Proudfoot, European Refugees, p. 80.

54. The figure of 400,000 divers for the Netherlands was given in an account by J.M. Romein, "The Spirit of the Dutch People During Occupation" in AAPS 245 (May 1946):175.

de Jong writes that by September 1944, there were more than 250,000 divers, in Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:529.

55. J. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober (Westkapelle, Zeeland: n.p. [1945]), p. 3. In the spring of 1941, the first workers from Organization Todt came to Zeeland. About 100 of them were put in barracks and lived just outside of Westkapelle. Provinciale Zeeuwsche Courant, 5 May 1979.

56. Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, 5 vols. (Middelburg, Zeeland: J.C. and W. Altorffer, [1945-1946]), vol. 3., Westkapelle in vuur en water, by A.F.C. de Casembroot, p. 95.

57. de Bree, Zeeland 1:216.

58. Ibid., p. 215.

59. De Vrije Zeeuw, 30 December 1944, p. 1. 12 Boston bombers threw 500 pound bombs out like peppercorns from a height of 4,500-5,000 metres. W.G. van Gelderen, "Vechtend Onder Commando van Majoor Kieffer" in Verolme Nieuws (January-February 1975), p. 98.

60. De Vrije Zeeuw, 30 December 1944, p. 1.

61. de Bree, Zeeland 1:273.

62. Ibid., p. 270.

63. "Flooded Dutch Island", Life 18 (19 March 1945):75-80.

64. de Bree, Zeeland 1:200.

65. Ibid., p. 324. Also Major-General J.J. de Wolf, interview by J. Wigard, 1 July 1972, transcript, SCML.

66. Kalendar, p. 324.

67. de Bree, Zeeland 1:201 For travel to homes via areas that were evacuated either due to flooding or German orders, permission needed to be obtained from the office of Zeeland's Reichscommissaris. Letters which applied for this request are stored in BRK, file 72^{03}, RvO. Travellers from outside the province could not enter Zeeland unless they had permission as after May 1941, Zeeland and other parts of the country became "off limits for all Dutchmen except the

inhabitants of that region." Maass, The Netherlands at War, p. 64.

68. de Bree, Zeeland 1:309-310.

69. Ibid., pp. 280-282.

70. Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek, Economische en Sociale Kroniek, pp. 113; 116.

71. The head of this organization was F.W. van Vloten, an N.S.B. burgemeester of Delft.

72. Resentment ran so high against the W.H.N. that one Dutchman gave the following comment, "Geen knoop van mijn gulp voor Winterhulp!" (No button from my fly for Winterhelp!) de Bree, Zeeland 1:236.

73. Ibid., pp. 313; 252.

74. Provinciale Zeeuwse Elektriciteits Maatschappij (P.Z.E.M.), Tussen Stroom en Water: Vijftig jaar PZEM (n.p., n.p., 1969), p. 109.

75. A reminder that no one was to use water to water one's garden or to scrub the streets, carried in a local paper is found in Ibid., p. 112.

76. "The Netherlands had to produce herself all meat to be consumed in the country" causing a further decrease in the number of cows. J.P. van Aartsen, "Consequences of the War on Agriculture in the Netherlands" in International Review of Agriculture 37 (1946):23. At his trial, Seyss-Inquart said, "The Reich demanded . . . vegetables and also the delivery of cattle, canned meats, seeds, and some other products." Trial of the Major War Criminals 16:13. Many of these problems were outlined to Munzer in the report "Te werkstelling elders van arbeidskrachten in den land bouw", (15 June 1943), BRK, file 52^{02}, II, RvO. The need for labourers can be seen in "Arbeidersbehoefte Inn Den Land -en Tuinbouw in Zeeland 1944", BRK, file 52^{02}, II, RvO.

77. The Germans printed various propoganda sheets and handed them out to the Zeeuws farmers encouraging them to use their pasture lands for growing grain. BRK, file 41^{00}, RvO.

78. de Bree, Zeeland 1:277.

79. Karhof, p. 52.

80. One paper encouraged this circulation by stating that ' "Vrij Goes" is geen archief stuk, maar moet doorgegeven worden.' (Vrij Goes is no archival piece -- it needs to be passed around). Vrij Goes, 25 September 1944, p. 1.

81. This paper omits the whole topic of international espionage in the Netherlands, due basically to its relative unimportance. Its track record was horrendous. "SOE, [Special Operations Executive] in fact, in Holland holds the wooden spoon among secret services;" and in terms of getting agents captured by the Germans, "the results were worse than unhappy; they were disasterous." M.R.D. Foot, Resistance: European Resistance to Nazism 1940-1945 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977), pp. 267, 265.

82. Those involved in the underground were given a manual that contained such pieces of advice as, "Beware of your neighbours and best friends", and "Anybody doing important work must keep his house 'clean'." O.S.S. State Department, Intelligence and Reserch Reports, Part 4:Germany and its Occupied Territories During World War II, vol. 6, "A Dutch Underground Manual" (17 February 1944).

83. J.A. Bruins Slot, "The Resistance" in AAPS 245 (May 1946):146.

84. de LO-LKP-Stichting, Het Grote Gebod: Gedenkboek van het Verzet in LO en LKP (Bilthoven, The Netherlands: J.H. Kok N.V., Kampen en H. Nelissen, 1951), 1:299, 304.

85. Ibid, pp. 299-304. Vrije Stemmen, 14 November 1944, p. 1, reported that 503 divers had been cared for in South Beveland.

86. J.A. Bruins Slot, "The Resistance", p. 146.

87. "Notes on Dutch Resistance Organizations". SHAEF summary sent to G.S., 2 Cdn. Inf. Div. dated 13 October 1944. PAC, RG24, Vol. 10, 903. For more on the LO and the KP, as well as specific names of the Zeeuws involved in these organizations, see the appropriate sections in Het Grote Gebod. Also see such files as numbers 26 and 27 for remembrance accounts of the underground and particular names in the Major Rooze Collection, The Hague: Koninklijke Landmacht Sectie Krijgeschiedenis, Frederikkazerne bibliotheek. See also "Zeeland '40-'45" file, portfolios #6 and 7, SCML, for interviews with specific L.O. members. The

private schools, mainly the Protestant Christian schools, had their own resistance movement which mainly centred around the Germans taking away the private school board's constitutional rights gained in 1917. These rights were that the school boards could choose their own teachers, textbooks and pedagogical methods even though they received funding from the state. The Germans took on the power of hiring and firing teachers, replacing fired ones with N.S.B.'ers again. Those teachers let go, would either become divers or go to Germany to work. With the former, the LO helped out. For a fuller account of this, see J.C.H. de Pater, Het Schoolverzet, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969). With an English Summary.

88. de LO-LKP-Stichting, Het Grote Gebod, p. 294. Unorganized as other than the afore-mentioned groups.

89. Karhof, Bezet, Verzet, Ontzet, p. 45.

90. de LO-LKP-Stichting, Het Grote Gebod, p. 295.

91. A 'V' on the wall stood for 'Victory'; 'O.Z.O.' for 'Oranje zal Overwinnen' (Orange House will overcome the enemy); 'W' for 'Wilhelmina'. de Bree, Zeeland 1:257.

92. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:493. Another account is found in the diary of the 15th Canadian Field Regiment. "Civilians reported locations of mines, guns and blown bridges. . . . [Most of these reports] are investigated and in a great many cases are very helpful. WD 15th Cdn. Fd. Reg., 20 September 1944, PAC, RG 24, Vol. 14,295.

93. 12 June 1945, p. 1.

94. See Knickerbocker Weekly, 20 November 1944, p. 5, for a story on twenty-two-year old Francien de Zeeuw, a telephone operator in Terneuzen who carried ration cards in the hem of her skirt and then delivered them to those in the underground. Penalty if caught, which she was, was death. However, the Germans were too busy in those fall days fighting the Allies and she managed to escape, only to go back to the same type of resistance work again.

95. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:221-222.

96. O.S.S. State Department, "Survey of the Netherlands", p. 65.

97. de Jong, The Lion Rampant, p. 89.

98. Maass, The Netherlands at War, pp. 68-69.

99. Foot, European Resistance to Nazism, p. 263.

100. de Jong, The Lion Rampant, p.v. In their quest to find events that made life unbearable for the N.S.B'er and that also lifted the war clouds momentarily from their own lives, the Zeeuws became very good at the 'unique'. At a certain village in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, an N.S.B. mayor was being installed into office, an affair surrounded by a great deal of noise and celebration. Zeeuws farmers, however, had agreed beforehand to push carts through the streets overloaded with manure. That a lot of the smelly material fell off the carts right in front of the town hall where the celebration was taking place, was 'just natural' due to the bumpy cobblestones in the road! de LO-LKP-Stichting, Het Grote Gebod, p. 295.

101. G.P. van der Stroom, Het Erfahrungsbericht Zeeland (Middelburg, Zeeland: Provincie Zeeland, 1979), p. 5.

102. For an in-depth study of the strike, see P.J. Bouman, De April-Mei-Stakingen van 1943 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950). With an English Summary.

103. Ibid., p. 447.

104. Ibid., p. 149.

105. P.Z.E.M., Tussen Stroom en Water, pp. 111, 113.

106. van der Stroom, Het Erfahrungsbericht Zeeland, pp. 11, 13.

107. A.J.C. Ruter, Rijden en Staken: De Nederlandse Spoorwegen in Oorlogstijd (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 475.

108. Warmbrunn, Dutch Under German Occupation, p. 53.

109. de Bree, Zeeland 1:316.

110. James L. Moulton, The Battle for Antwerp (London: Allen, 1978), p. 81.

111. Colin Partridge, Hitler's Atlantic Wall (Casbel,

Guernsey, Channel Islands: D.I. Publications, 1976), pp. 68-69.

112. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:1338. 'Rommel asparagus' were named after General Erwin Rommel, whose name when translated into the Dutch means 'mess' or 'untidy'. The picture these poles gave, planted throught the countryside certainly made the landscape messy.

113. Karhof, Bezet, Verzet, Ontzet, p. 24, states that tree trunks were brought in from Brabant to make these poles.

114. Provinciale Zeeuwsche Courant, 5 May 1979.

115. Ibid.

116. This was because of their unemployment, and the high wages the Germans offered. See Major-General J.J. de Wolf, interview by J. Wigard.

117. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 7:1337.

118. Ibid., 1336-1337.

119. Dr. G. Taal, interview with author, Middelburg, Zeeland, 10 June 1980. From a population of 254,000, the N.S.B. party managed to get 1.8% of its adherents from Zeeland in 1940. This figure rose to its highest point of 2.08% (75,363 N.S.B.'ers of which 1,568 were from Zeeland) in the third quarter of 1941. de Bree, Zeeland, 1:224. Most of Zeeland's support for the N.S.B. movement came from South Beveland, especially from Goes, "broeinest van de N.S.B." ('breeding nest' of the N.S.B.), Karhof, Bezet, Verzet, Ontzet, p. 19.

120. Alan Wilt, The Atlantic Wall, Hitler's Defenses in the West, 1941-1944 (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1975), p. 148.

121. Moulton, The Battle for Antwerp, p. 82.

122. Wilt, The Atlantic Wall, p. 148.

123. Ibid., p. 44.

124. C.P. Stacey, Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, vol. 3: The Victory Campaign (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1960), p. 301.

125. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:126.

126. In 1930, German civilians comprised the largest foreign group in the Netherlands. At that time there were 101,955 Germans in the Netherlands. This number would be increased after the German invasion of May 1940. O.S.S. State Department, "Survey of the Netherlands", p. 11.

127. C.B. MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1963), pp. 218 - 219.

128. B. Koning, Bevrijding Van Nederland 1944-45 (Nijkerk: G.F. Callenback, 1960), p. 66.

129. M.P. de Bruin and J.H. Wigard, "Maple Leaf in de Klei" in Bericht Van de Tweede Wereld Oorlog, no. 76, p. 2113, states: "He had a first class fighting division of 14,000 men, of whom many had fought in the Eastern front."

130. Rooze Collection, file #20.

Chapter Three

1. Memo, 9 September 1944 by General D. Eisenhower to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Alfred D. Chandler, ed., The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years, 5 vols. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1970), 4:2125.

2. Knickerbocker Weekly, 13 November 1944, p. 5.

3. Ross Munro, Gauntlet to Overlord (Toronto: MacMillan Co., of Canada Ltd., 1945), p. 223.

4. On the 5th of September, the people of Middelburg felt that the Allies would come any minute. Thus they closed their stores and dressed for liberation, some people walking around with their Sunday suits on. As time went on and the Allies did not come, the feeling of optimism gave way to one of disgruntlement. Bombing of their city then occured and for the next few weeks people kept asking, "Where are the English?" dB, 5 September 1944.

5. Charles B. MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1963), p. 219.

6. "Yes [the floodings could be seen as part of the Atlantic Wall] . . . one sort of obstacle, that is the flooding. A very important hinderance because floodings can not be destroyed, they are indestructible . . . with any kind of obstacle you build - tank walls, anti-tank ditches, - they can always be shot apart, be bombed. But not floodings." Major-General J.J. de Wolf, interview by J.H. Wigard, 1 July 1972, transcript, SCML.

7. Churchill, happy to see that his commanders could run such risks, termed the battle a "decided victory". Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), p. 200.

8. See J.T. Copp and R. Vogel, "No Lack of Rational Speed" in Journal of Canadian Studies 16 (Fall-Winter 1981):145-155. Ralph Allen, writing for the Globe and Mail, showed good insight when, in 1944 already, he raised the idea that the battle of Antwerp would become a controversial issue over time, one that would lead historians to see it in different lights. See "Trail of Glory Blazed in Battle for Antwerp is Historian's Headache," Globe and Mail, 1 November 1944, p. 13.

9. Chandler, The Papers of Eisenhower 4:2175.

10. Ibid., p. 2215.

11. C.P. Stacey, The Canadian Army:1939-1945 (Ottawa: Edmund Cloutier, King's Printer, 1948), p. 221. "The series of operations, by The Canadian II Corps, . . . operations so arduous and dismal that some survivors described the Normandy invasion as 'a picnic by comparison' - were at least enlivened by their code names." John North, North-West Europe 1944-5, The Achievement of 21st Army Group, Short Military History Series of the Second World War, 1939-45 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1953), p. 130.

12. WD A and SH of C, 7 September 1944, PAC, RG24, Vol. 15,005.

13. Munro, Gauntlet to Overlord, p. 226.

14. For an account of this battle and its aftermath see Karel Aernoudts, Waar de rode klaproos bloeit (Oostburg, Zeeland: W.J. Pieters, n.d.), especially chapter 2.

15. "Interrogation Report, Major-General Saunders, Gen.

Intelligence HQ Cdn. Forces in the Netherlands, 30 September 1945" PAC, RG24, Vol. 13,784.

16. WD 4th Cdn. Arm'd. Div., 14 September 1944, PAC, RG24, Vol. 13,789.

17. WD Al. Reg., 14 September 1944, PAC, RG24, Vol. 15,000.

18. C.P. Stacey, Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, vol. 3: The Victory Campaign (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1960), p. 363.

19. Ibid., pp. 326, 362.

20. 'October in Holland is sometimes a fine, dry month, particularly after a bad summer. Lately rain and mist have been Hitler's best "secret weapon."' Knickerbocker Weekly, 6 November 1944, p. 6. In September 1944, the Netherlands had 116 mm of rain when they normally get 64 mm; 80 mm in October as compared to a norm of 76 mm, and 155 mm actual in November, over double the normal average of 65 mm for that month. Herman Collection, The Hague: Koninklijke Landmacht Sectie Krijgeschiedenis, Frederickkazerne bibliotheek, box #658, appendix 1, page 3.

21. John Ellis, The Sharp End. The Fighting Man in World War II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), p. 48.

22. Ibid., p. 24.

23. Ibid., p. 187.

24. "18% of our total casualties during Operation SWITCHBACK were due to battle exhaustion and this is an unusually high figure for this formation. The extremely trying conditions and the number of repeat cases were contributing factors to this high figure, but it was stressed that proper training and wise allocation of personnel can do much to decrease this figure." "Headquarters 3 Canadian Infantry Division. Op Switchback - Study Period. Dyke and Polder Fighting. Part II - Adm. Notes, 20 November 1944" PAC, RG 24, Vol. 10,947.

25. W.R. Feasby, ed., Official History of the Canadian Medical Services 1934-1945, vol. 1: Organization and Campaigns (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1956), p. 266.

26. WD Land W Reg., 19 and 21 September 1944.

27. 21 September 1944, PAC, RG24, vol. 14,295.

28. WD 4th Cdn. Arm'd. Div., 20 September 1944.

29. WD Al. Reg., 21 September 1944.

30. Ibid., 21-26 September 1944.

31. WD 29 Cdn. Recce Armd. Reg., 21 September 1944, PAC, RG24, vol. 14,295.

32. WD A and SH of C, 19 September 1944.

33. Ibid., 23 September 1944; also WD 4th Cdn. Arm'd Div. (Main), 23 September 1944.

34. WD A and SH of C, 17 October 1944.

35. WD Al. Reg., 22 October 1944.

36. From the 26-30th of October, "fighting was heavy as the Brigade pushed on towards Bergen op Zoom, and by the time it was captured the advanced dressing station at Huijbergen had handled 203 casualties." Feasby, Organization and Campaigns, p. 261.

37. WD 24th Cdn. Recce Arm'd Reg., 28 October 1944.

38. WD L and W Reg., 31 October 1944.

39. WD A and SH of C, 17 October 1944.

40. WD Lake Superior (Motor) Regiment, 27 October 1944, PAC, RG24, vol. 15,098.

41. WD, 4th Cdn Arm'd Div. (Main), 31 October 1944.

42. WD, 29th Cdn. Recce Arm'd Reg., 26 October 1944. For an outline paper on the various types of German booby traps and mines, see Ernest Mayer and Oliver Wilson, "German Mines and Booby Traps," The Military Engineer 37 (March 1945):79-84.

43. Two battalions of German paratroopers "had instructions to hold on at all costs." WD A and SH of C, 29 October 1944.

44. 15 October 1944.

45. 21 October 1944.

46. WD A and SH of C, 14 October 1944.

47. Ibid., 5 November 1944.

48. R.W. Thompson, The eighty-five days. The Story of the Battle of the Scheldt (London: Hutchinson, [1957]), cited by de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:504.

49. Munro, Gauntlet to Overlord, p. 233.

50. Knickerbocker Weekly, 6 November 1944, p. 6.

51. 'Headquarters 3 Canadian Infantry Division, Air Sp Op "Switchback", 20 November 1944,' PAC, RG24, vol. 10,672.

52. Walter B. Maass, The Netherlands at War: 1940-1945 (Toronto: Abelard-Schuman, 1970), p. 21.

53. Stacey, The Victory Campaign, p. 400.

54. W.A.B. Douglas and B. Greenhous, Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second world War (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 204.

55. On October 25th, the 2nd Division's advance into South Beveland became known as "Vitality I" and the British 52nd Division's operation from Terneuzen across the West Scheldt was known as "Vitality II". Stacey, The Victory Campaign, p. 401.

56. MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign, p. 227.

57. "The Capture of Zuid Beveland:Account by Brigadier R.N. Keefler, E.D., A/Comd, 2 Cdn Inf Div., Given to Historical Officer, 2 Cdn Inf Div, 11 November 1944", PAC, RG24, Vol. 10,847.

58. Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, p. 201, claims that there were nearly 10,000 men here. D.D. Eisenhower, Crusade to Europe (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1948), p. 327 claims that 10,000 Germans alone were captured on the island.

59. Walcheren Island was a "German Gibraltar", having over fifty pieces of field and coastal artillery that were between 75 and 250 mm. Information on six batteries found on

Walcheren show the awesome defence the Germans had here. A 150 mm calibre gun fired a ninety-six pound shell and had a range of about 14,500 yards (see the map of Walcheren).
W 19; Oostkapelle - - Four 94 mm guns
W 17; Domburg - - Four 220 mm guns, one 150 mm gun
W 15; Westkapelle - - Four 94 mm Aa guns, two 76 mm AA guns
W 13; Zoutelande - - Four 150 mm guns
W 11; Dishoek - - Four 150 mm guns
W 7; Vlissingen - - Three 150 mm guns
Albert Baldewyns and Andre Herman-Lemoine, De Kanonnen Van Walcheren, trans. Het Volk (Ghent: Het Volk, 1977), pp. 74 & 75.

60. A minor operation took place on North Beveland. The 8th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment was sent over on 31 October and over-ran the island in two days, taking about 500 Germans prisoner. See T.M. Hunter, "The Capture of North Beveland" in The Canadian Army Journal 11 (April 1957):33-46.

61. In his many works, de Jong makes frequent mention that the Dutch government-in-exile was not told about the plan to inundate the island and that they were, understandably, upset. See for example, Herdenking Bevrijding Zeeland. Dinner talk by L. de Jong, published to commemorate the 25th anniversary of freedom in Zeeland (Middelburg, Zeeland: Provincial Bestuur van Zeeland, 1969), p. 5.

62. "World Battlefronts: At Last Antwerp," Time 44 (13 November 1944):12.

63. Daser wanted to surrender but with a certain amount of class and military respect. He would not talk to anyone below the rank of colonel. Major R.H.B. Johnston of the 7/9th Royal Scots, quickly became a colonel and informed Daser that the British had arrived, and that he should surrender or else Middelburg would be destroyed. Daser submitted but was visibly upset when he found out that the act was premature. The 'British Army' turned out to be no more than seventy troops that came in on a few tanks with such names as 'Spider', 'Skunk', and 'Socrates'. Johnston had bluffed and ended up taking 2,000 prisoners and freeing Middelburg. Moulton, Battle for Antwerp, pp. 218-220; dB, 6 November 1944.

64. Approximately 10,000 Germans, of the 40,000 captured in the Scheldt battle were taken on Walcheren.

65. 'On 28 November the Canadian Army, had it been there, would have had the satisfaction of seeing the first freighter, the Canadian built "Fort Cataraqui", sail up the Scheldt and into the Port of Antwerp, but already the Army was far away, the battles of the Scheldt behind it and the Maas and Rhine before it as it prepared for the great spring offensive.' W.A. McKay, "The Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps In North-West Europe, 1944-45" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1951), pp. 186-187.

66. During September and October, while the Allies were moving closer to Zeeland, the Germans started to launch their new weapons with increased usage. These weapons were pilotless aircraft known as V1 and V2 rockets. They were sent over from various launching sites to London or Antwerp, and continued to cause destruction on freed territories as late as 30 March 1945. While many fell right on Antwerp, about 2,500 of them fell on an area around the city as well, one supposedly even falling on a soccer field in the sports complex in Middelburg. Major Barnard of the 612 Detachment in Vlissingen also noted a "land explosion reported to be a V.2. prematurely exploding on way to England. War Diary, Unit 612 Det. C.A., author's copy. MacDonald, The Siegfried Line, p. 230; dB, 16 September 1944. Casualties from a single bomb were often heavy and this forced the 2nd Canadian Division to "set aside one ambulance car and orderly at divisional headquarters, and had each medical unit within the division set aside an emergency squad to deal with casualties resulting from V2 action." W. A. McKay, "The R.C.A. Medical Corps," p. 186.

67. WD A and SH of C, 5 November 1944.

68. Stacey, The Victory Campaign, p. 424.

69. Insert on the flyleaf by B.L. Montgomery in Munro, Gauntlet to Overlord.

Chapter Four

1. "Battle of Germany (West)," Time 44 (13 November 1944):11.

2. Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek, Statistisch Zakboek 1944-1946 (Utrecht: W. de Haan, 1947), p. 3.

3. Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, 5 vols. (Middelburg, Zeeland: J.C. and W. Altorffer, [1945-1946]), vol. 5: De Strijd in Zeeuwsch Vlaanderen, Schouwen en Zuid Beveland, by N. Karhof and P. de Winde, p. 181.

4. Walcheren Onder Vreemde Heersers (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1945), p. 111.

5. Dochter van de smid (twenty-two-year-old daughter of Biervliet's blacksmith), Dagboek Fragmenten 1940:1945 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954), p. 415.

6. Ibid., p. 413.

7. Vrije Stemmen Uit de Ganzestad, 9 February 1945, p. 1.

8. Knickerbocker Weekly, 5 February 1945, p. 9.

9. Centraal Bureau, Statistisch Zakboek, p. 3.

10. Ibid. Also Karhof and de Winde, De Strijd in Zeeuwsch Vlaanderen, p. 157.

11. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, 10 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969-1980) 10:508.

12. M.P. de Bruin and J.H. Wigard, "Maple Leaf in de Klei" in Bericht Van de Tweede Wereld Oorlog, no. 76, p. 2116.

13. Vrije Zeeuw, 9 January 1945, p. 1.; Karhof and de Winde, De Strijd in Zeeuwsch Vlaanderen, p. 157, states that 350 died in Breskens alone.

14. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:508.

15. Karhof and de Winde, De Strijd in Zeeuwsch Vlaanderen, p. 157.

16. Vrije Stemmen, 30 December 1944, p. 1.

17. Knickerbocker Weekly, 5 February 1945, p. 9.

18. 245 Allied soldiers, 636 German soldiers, and 334 people in the city were killed in the contest for Vlissingen. A. Korteweg, Oorlog aan de Scheldemond (Middelburg, Zeeland: Den Boer, 1947), p. 122.

19. Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, 5 vols. (Middelburg, Zeeland: J.C. and W. Altorffer, [1945-1946]), vol 2, Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, by H.B. Knoop, p. 51.

20. Centraal Bureau, Statistisch Zakboek, p. 3.

21. Vrije Stemmen, 28 November 1944, p. 1.

22. See Knoop, Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, pp. 41, 48-49 for a breakdown of specific buildings damaged.

23. Korteweg, Oorlog aan de Scheldemond, p. 122.

24. Vrije Stemmen, 16 December 1944, p. 2.

25. dB, 11 October 1944.

26. de Bree, Walcheren Onder Vreemde Heersers, p. 116.

27. Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, 5 vols. (Middelburg, Zeeland: J.C. and W. Altorffer, [1945-1946]), vol. 1, Middelburg in Bewogen Dagen, by M. de Vink, N. Karhof and M. Baas, p. 30. "Here man cannot count on eating or obtaining doctor's help anymore." dB, 13 October 1944. As liberation came closer, the Germans tried to win over the city's inhabitants by giving away food. de Vink et al, Middelburg in Bewogen Dagen, p. 30.

28. de Vink et al, Middelburg in Bewogen Dagen, p. 30. Vrije Stemmen, 6 February 1945, p. 2 states that electricity and telephone were back on that month.

29. Knickerbocker Weekly, 8 January 1945, p. 5.

30. Vrije Stemmen, 6 February 1945, p. 2. Not enough water to wash one's self or one's clothes.

31. Centraal Bureau, Statistisch Zakboek, p. 3.

32. Knickerbocker Weekly, 18 December 1944, p. 60.

33. J. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober (Westkapelle, Zeeland: n.p., [1945]), p. 9.

34. Henk van Waard, Walcheren Onder de Zeegolven (The Hague: Batavia, 1945), as cited by Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober, p. 10.

974), no's. 11 & 12, p. 3.

36. Vrije Stemmen, 6 February 1945, p. 2.

37. Ibid.

38. Knickerbocker Weekly, 15 January 1945, p. 4.

39. Vrije Stemmen, 14 November 1944, p. 1.

40. Vrij Nederland, 18 November 1944, p. 511.

41. Knickerbocker Weekly, 13 November 1944, p. 6.

42. G.J. Thiemann, gen. ed., Onderdrukking en Verzet:Nederland in Oorlogstijd, 4 vols. (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, [1947-1954]), vol. 4, Bevrijding Van Nederland, p. 345.

43. Karhof and de Winde, De Strijd in Zeeuwsch Vlaanderen, p. 181.

44. Rijksdienst voor Landbouwherstel, Inspectie Zeeland, "Dutch Service for Agricultural Restoration" (Goes: June 1946), p. 1., DCZD.

45. Major-General J.J. de Wolf, interview with J.H. Wigard, 1 July 1972, transcript, SCML.

46. Herman Collection, report "Betreffende de inundatie gesteld in West Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen", The Hague: Koninklijke Landmacht Sectie Krijgeschiedenis, Frederikkazerne bibliotheek, box 658, vol. 2., appendix 7b.

47. V.B. Elgersma et al, De Strijd in Westelijke Noord Brabant en Zeeland (The Hague: Hogere Krijgschool, 1961), appendix 7, pp. 13-15. This work located in the Rooze Collection, Frederickkazerne bibliotheek.

48. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober, pp. 13-14.

49. "Het Aangezicht van de Oorlog", Verolme Nieuws (November-December 1974), no's. 11 & 12, p. 32.

50. Hilary Saunders, The Royal Air Force, vol. 3, The Fight is Won (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1954), p. 196.

51. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober, p. 8.

52. J. Heyn, Water over Walcheren: beelden van leven en lijden op verdronken land (Middelburg, Zeeland: 'N Brand, 1945), p. 15.

53. A. den Doolard, Walcheren Komt Boven Water (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1946), p. 3.

54. dB, 5 & 6 October 1944.

55. Ibid., 6 October 1944.

56. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:499.

57. dB, 7 October 1944.

58. See footnote #51, chapter 2.

59. dB, 8 October 1944.

60. dB, 14 October 1944, tells us that the people of Middelburg corporately made a decision not to build any more dikes.

61. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober, p. 14.

62. Centraal Bureau, Statistisch Zakboek, p. 5

a) "Dutch Service for Agricultural Restoration" p. 1.
b) V.B. Elgersma, De Strijd in Zeeland (Rooze Collection), pp. 13-15.
c) Herman Collection, "Staten van geinundeerde polders in De Provincie Zeeland", box #658, vol. 2, appendices 3b, 3c, 3g, 17.
d) Centraal Bureau, Statistisch Zakboek, p. 5.

63. Johan Van Veen, Dredge, Drain, Reclaim, 5th ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. 133.

64. dB, 2 November 1944.

65. Albert Balderwyn and Andre Herman-Lemoine, De Kanonnen van Walcheren, trans. Het Volk (Ghent:Het Volk, 1977), p. 182.

66. "De Aanval op een Verdronken Eiland", in Verolme Nieuws, no's. 11 & 12 (November-December 1974), p. 18.

67. Karhof and de Winde, De Strijd in Zeeuwsch Vlaanderen, p. 163.

68. Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, 5 vols. (Middelburg, Zeeland: J.C. and W. Altorffer, [1945-1946]), vol. 3, Westkapelle in Vuur en Water, by A.F.C. de Casembroot, p. 95.

69. de Vink et al, Middelburg in Bewogen Dagen, p. 34.

70. Ibid., p. 21.

71. N. Karhof, Bezet, Verzet, Ontzet:Goes en omgeving in de bewogen jaren 1940-1944 (Goes, Zeeland: Algemeene Boekhandel J. de Jonge, [1945]), p. 68.

72. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober, p. 25. Major Barnard of the 612 C.A. Detachment would not allow this to occur in Vlissingen. Lieutenant-Colonel W.A.T. Barnard, interview with the author, Toronto, Ontario, 28 May 1981.

73. Zeeland was declared an 'evacuation zone' in February 1944 and again in June 1945. This did not hinder inhabitants in the province to move about internally or to come back to the province, but did prevent outsiders from gathering in the province.

74. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober, p. 26.

75. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:508. While de Jong states that the 10,000 went to Belgium, another source claims that these persons were evacuated from the Breskens Pocket area to east Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. See Overzicht der Werkzaamheden van het Militair Gezag Gedurende de Bijzondere Staat van Beleg: 14 September 1944 - 4 Maart 1946 (The Hague: Afwikelingsbureau Militair Gezag, 1947), pp. 215-216.

76. Militair Gezag, p. 218.

77. Knickerbocker Weekly, 15 January 1945, p. 4.

78. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 10:529. Approximately 30,000 of the Island's 51,000 residents were eventually evacuated off this island.

79. Vrije Stemmen, 13 February 1945, p. 2.

80. 'Time and again the men of the British Army Service Corps . . . have risked their lives to take the people to safer spots. . . . One night during a gale they brought a number of the evacuees to Vrouwenpolder. . . . On another trip the "ducks" had to run through Nazi fire. . . . These hardy Britishers do not let little things like minefields or German fire stop them when a job has to be done.' Knickerbocker Weekly, 15 January 1945, p. 4.

81. "A trip from Domburg took on the average 6 hours, sometimes,however, 2 days." Militair Gezag, p. 218.

82. Dr. Fred C. Cornelissen, "Preliminary Report on the situation in two of the most devasted areas in the Netherlands and Suggested Plans for Quaker Relief," Middelburg: DCZD, archief van de Griffie, B44F/62[10], p. 14.

83. Vrije Stemmen, 13 February 1945, p. 2. A DUKW could handle thirty-two people and their baggage. Militair Gezag, p. 218.

84. Ligthart-Schenk, Westkapelle voor en na 3 Oktober, p. 25.

85. Ibid. Evacuees from Middelburg could take 200 kg of baggage per person. Militair Gezag, p. 218.

86. Vrij Nederland, 6 January 1945, p. 739.

87. 23 February 1945, p. 1.

88. "The Netherlands: Wij Zijn Bevrijd," Time 45 (15 January 1945):22.

89. 'The farmers kept insisting that "if the Lord wants to punish us this way no human being should interfere. If the Netherlands Government interferes it is not a Christian government."' Knickerbocker Weekly, 15 January 1945, p. 4.

90. Vrije Zeeuw, 23 February 1945, p. 1

91. Ibid., 21 February 1945, p. 1.

92. Ibid., 8 February 1945, p. 2.

93. Vrije Stemmen, 2 March 1945, p. 3.

94. Cornelissen, "Preliminary Report," pp. 18-21.

95. Dr. Fred C. Cornelissen, "Friends Relief Service. Walcheren. Report on the First Three Months Work, 15th March, 1946." Middelburg: DCZD, archief van de Griffie, B44F/62[126], p. 3. "As fresh water was drained out of the polders throughout the country the malarial mosquito reappeared, causing the malarial incidence to double in 1944." Dorothy Macardle, Children of Europe (London: Victor Collanez Ltd., 1949), p. 151. A title stumbled upon later may be of interest. H. Doeleman, De Malaria-epedemie to Middelburg in de jaren 1940 tot en met 1945: benevens een onderzoek van parasieten-gragers (Goes, Zeeland: n.p., 1946), DCZD.

96. Vrije Stemmen, 20 December 1944, p. 2.

97. Ibid., 28 December 1944, p. 2.

98. Militair Gezag, p. 145.

99. Ibid., pp. 146-148.

100. Two thousand men alone cleaned the dikes of Walcheren for mines --1,600 Dutch workers, 200 Dutch Pioneers, and 250 German P.O.W.'s. Vrij Nederland, 11 August 1945, p. 77.

101. Militair Gezag, p. 148.

102. The task that those who cleared mines in Zeeland faced, can best be seen in the following account of mine-clearing troops on Walcheren in the first few days of November:

> Unfortunately another L.V.T. [Landing Vehicle Tracked] was mined, this time in the cleared lane and a further sweeping produced one or two mines which had not been found on the first search. . . . It soon became evident that they were buried up to four feet deep, or rather in the course of months sand had silted over them to that depth in some places and less in others. This made clearance very difficult as the sand kept rutting and sinking under the weight of the L.V.T.'s and periodically a mine which had been beyond the reach of detectors and prodders would come into the danger zone and another vehicle would be destroyed. As no other path was possible at this time it was necessary to sweep and prod the vehicle lane at two-hour intervals and each time one or two mines were discovered. . . . On the sand dunes buried

shells were found under the double apron fence which marked one minefield. Some of the pickets supporting the wire were screwed into the fuze caps of the shells and arranged so that movement out of the vertical, such as would be produced by a man pulling them, would detonate the shells. E.W.L. Whitehorn, "The Attack on Walcheren Island," in The Royal Engineers Journal 59 (1945): 290-291.

103. Cornelissen, "Preliminary Report," p. 16.

104. The dikes broke at Vlissingen and the seawater came into J.J. Martijn's house, stopping half a metre below his attic. He then had to kill his twenty-four rabbits and put the goat up in the attic. "Ik beukte met een Voorhamer op enn witgrijze bom, waarop 1000 kg. stond . . .", Verolme Nieuws (May-July 1975), no.'s 5-7, p. 37.

105. Vrij Nederland, 13 January 1945, p. 762. "The only favourable aspect of their [the Zeeuws'] situation was that food was ample, as the harvest had been gathered before inundations began, and a large number of cattle had to be slaughtered lest they drown," thereby providing further food. Knickerbocker Weekly, 8 January 1945, p. 4. Although food was rationed in the province and some Zeeuws ate horse-meat soup, the food situation was never really bad. In January residents of Vlissingen were on an 1,100 calorie ration, which quickly went up to 2,000 by 3 February as supplies kept making there way to this liberated area. W D 612 Civil Affairs Detachment, 31 January-3 February. In Goes, salted Newfoundland herring was available in January 1945 on the open market. Vrije Stemmen, 26 January 1945, p. 2. Thanks to the support England gave in helping to better the food situation, the Zeeuws never really knew real hunger, or what flower bulbs tasted like, and by May 1945, while western Netherlands barely managed to get throught the terrible hunger winter, bread-crusts were already in the garbage cans in Domburg. A.F.C. de Casembroot, Westkapelle in Vuur en Water, p. 112; L .W. de Bree and M.P. de Bruin, "Zeeuws Prentenboek," Zeeuws Tijdschrift (1969), no. 5, p. 159.

106. "Circulation from house to house in boats, or by wading through the water in carts, the horses having water up to their flanks . . . [or by] light gangways improvised with planks" became the mode of travel in flooded villages and towns. Cornelissen, "Preliminary Report," p. 16.

107. Most animals, such as rabbits and pheasants died due to drowning or lack of drinking water. Rats, mice and bugs

all became a nuisance for the Zeeuws. Mussels and clams fastened themselves on to everything and two seals were even spotted swimming over the island. Needless to say, the immobile flora all died. See J.A. Trimpe Burger, "Plant, dier en inundatie," in Zeeuws Tijdschrift (1969), no. 5. p. 163; W.S.S. Benthem Jutting, "Marine Organisms in the Island of Walcheren During the Inundation 1940-1945," in Zeeuwsh Genootschap der Wetenschappen 1944-45 (Middelburg, Zeeland: n.p., 1946).

108. The damage done by salt water to crops and livestock comes more from the chlorine in the water than the sodium. One milligram of salt is 60% chlorine, and in one litre of salt water, there are 30,000 milligrams of chlorine. Water used for irrigation in the Netherlands can not contain more than 300 milligrams of chlorine per litre, a concentration that already cuts down grape and tomato yields by 10-15%. Agricultural crops which are less sensitive to salt than horticultural crops, can take water with a chlorine content of 1,800 milligrams per litre, still far under the chlorine content of sea water. J. S. Lingsma, Holland and the Delta Plan, trans. C. van Amerongen, 2nd ed. (Rotterdam: Nijgh and van Ditmar, 1964), p. 25.

109. Lingsma, Holland and the Delta Plan, p. 25.

110. "Flooded Dutch Island" in Life 18 (12 March 1945):75; den Doolard, Walcheren Komt Boven Water, pp. 17-20; Van Veen, Dredge, Drain and Reclaim, p. 134.

111. "There is a critical lack of clothing. Most people have only what they wear, the rest having been destroyed with their homes. Not one workman has a proper pair of heavy boots. There is no sign of supplies arriving." Knickerbocker Weekly, 5 February 1945, p. 9. Cornelissen, in his excellent "Preliminary Report," p. 14., argues that there is a "severe need of winter clothing, work clothing, rubber boots, shoes, [and] black woollen stockings for the peasant women." In discussing the needs of Zouteland residents, he writes, "Very sudden and rapid inundation destroyed much bedding and clothing. Need of . . . work shoes and rubber boots for the dyke workers who go daily to Westkapelle (4 miles) to repair the dyke." Ibid.

112. The Swiss sent wooden barracks to Walcheren to house the 3,000 dike workers on the island.

113. den Doolaard, Walcheren Komt Boven Water, p. 18.

114. Rijksdienst voor Landbouwherstel, "Dutch Survey for Agricultural Restoration," p. 2.

115. Ibid.

116. Van Veen, Dredge, Drain, Reclaim, p. 134.

117. The Zeeuws had a saying, "Waar een wil is, is een dijk" (Where there is a will, there is a dike).

118. J.W. Rengelink, The Reconstruction of the Netherlands, trans. R. Springett (Heemsteede, Holland: MUBRO, 1947), p. 15.

119. Caissons were reinforced concrete boxes which would be sunk on the brushwood mats in the gaps. They would be able to withstand the current's force much better than stone, clay, or sand, especially as the gaps became smaller and smaller. The largest caissons weighed 3,000 tons and were 200 feet long. See Lingsma, Holland and the Delta Plan, pp. 40-48, for a discussion on how these are made and used.

120. Van Veen, Dredge, Drain, Reclaim, pp. 148-149.

121. den Doolard, Walcheren Komt Boven Water, p. 57. See this work and Zeeland in Bewogen Dagen, 5 vols. (Middelburg, Zeeland: J.C. and W. Altorffer, [1945-1946]), vol. 4., De Droogmaking van Walcheren, by W. Metzelaar, for specific accounts of the closing of each of the four gaps. Both have maps and sketches as well. The gap at Rammekens was closed in February 1946. The Vlissingen-Veere canal though prevented the water from affecting the major portion of Walcheren that was being pumped dry.

Chapter Five

1. J. Heyn, Water over Walcheren. Beelden van Leven en lijden op verdronken land (Middelburg, Zeeland: 'N Brand, 1945), p. 62.

2. The rats plagued man's food supply and gnawed on everything in sight. One gets a sick feeling in one's stomach after reading this next quote and envisioning this wave of rats descending into town. "Report by police that rats have been seen coming over Singel Dyke towards town [Vlissingen]. There is no rat poison available. . . ." W D 612 C. A. Detachment, 26 March 1945.

3. Theodor Carp, "Holland as Polderland" in The Military Engineer 37 (January 1945):11.

4. A. Korteweg, Oorlog aan de Scheldemond (Middelburg, Zeeland: Den Boer, 1947), p. 121.

5. C.J.H. Maliepaard, "The Agricultural Situation" in AAPS 245(May 1946), p. 54.

6. Ibid.

7. J. Van Veen, Dredge, Drain, Reclaim, 5th Ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. 171.

8. Paul Wagret, Polders, Trans. Margaret Sparks (London: Methuen and Company Limited, 1968), p. 14.

9. Ibid. He quotes the figure of 18,000 but this is obviously a printing error as other sources all concur with the 1,800 figure (or very close to it).

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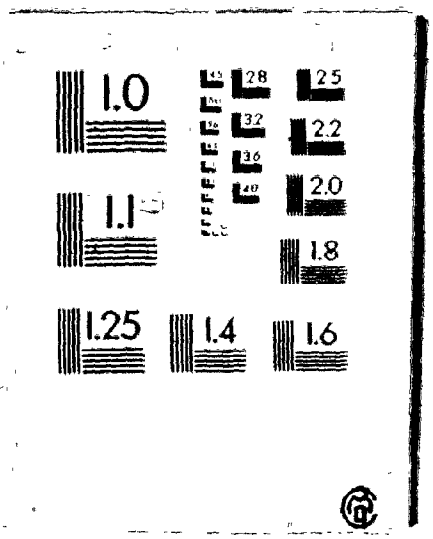

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