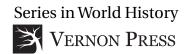
"As political soldiers we face Moscow's hordes"

Dutch volunteers in the Waffen-SS

by

Evertjan van Roekel



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For Isabella

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Foreword by David Stahel

Hitler's Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 with over three million men, setting in motion the largest war in history. Many dimensions of that titanic struggle are still being charted and understood, but one of the most apparent black holes surrounds the war's international character. The grand narrative is overwhelmingly dominated by Germany and Russia with little sense that each nation had a host of allied or subjugated nations fighting with them – sometimes at tremendous cost – throughout the war.

The Soviet Union in 1941 was made up of fifteen republics which today are all independent nations, yet authors routinely refer to "the Russians," which at a stroke removes any acknowledgement of the nine European and five Asian nations who also sacrificed in what became known as the Soviet Union's "Great Patriotic War." Similarly, Hitler's allies contributed some three-quarters of a million additional troops to the eastern front in 1941 alone. These men came mainly from national armies allied to Germany, but also included thousands of volunteers from occupied, neutral and nominally independent nations across Europe.

Having written extensively on Germany's war in the east in 1941, in 2014, I wanted to address the information deficit surrounding Hitler's allies in the east by proposing to Cambridge University Press an edited collection written by leading authorities from around Europe. Each chapter was to focus on an individual country in 1941 with the objective being to discover why so many countries or individual volunteers became involved in Hitler's war in the east and how those contrasting experiences played out in the first months of the war. Like so many aspects of the international dimension to the eastern front, the existing answers in German or Anglo-American literature were typically not rooted in primary or even secondary research in the target country's language, meaning that even seventy-five years after the war we still had a rather rudimentary understanding of this fundamental question.

With Cambridge keen to pursue the project, the search was on authors and I had a readymade list of names I wanted, Evertjan van Roekel being the natural choice for the Netherlands. Not surprisingly, his chapter proved outstanding and sailed through the Cambridge peer review process without a single requested change from either reader. More to the point, he offered a wonderfully concise answer to an exceptionally large and complex question. The advantage of the present work is that the enforced constraints of brevity have now been shed, allowing a far more complete look at all aspects of the Dutch experience of the eastern front. It is a landmark study, not because the

Dutch contribution to the eastern front was large, but because it provides a wholly unique perspective on the greatest war of the twentieth century.

Dr. David Stahel Senior Lecturer, School of Humanities and Social Sciences University of New South Wales, Australia

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Acronyms

ANPAlgemeen Nederlands Persbureau (General Dutch Press Office)BEFBritish Expeditionary ForceBGBijzonder Gerechtshof (Special Court of Justice)BRTBelgische Radio- en Televisieomroep (Belgian Radio and Television Broadcasting)BSBinnenlandse Strijdkrachten (Domestic Armed Forces)CABRCentraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (Central Archive Special Judicial Procedure)CBGCentraal Bureau voor Genealogie (Central Bureau of Statistics)DAPDeutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Workers' Party)ECHREisernes Kreuz (Iron Cross)Fw.Freiwillige (Voluntary)
BGBijzonder Gerechtshof (Special Court of Justice)BRTBelgische Radio- en Televisieomroep (Belgian Radio and Television Broadcasting)BSBinnenlandse Strijdkrachten (Domestic Armed Forces)CABRCentraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (Central Archive Special Judicial Procedure)CBGCentraal Bureau voor Genealogie (Central Bureau of Genealogy)CBSCentraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Central Bureau of Statistics)DAPDeutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Workers' Party)ECHREuropean Convention on Human RightsEKEisernes Kreuz (Iron Cross)
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 CABR Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (Central Archive Special Judicial Procedure) CBG Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie (Central Bureau of Genealogy) CBS Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Central Bureau of Statistics) DAP Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Workers' Party) ECHR European Convention on Human Rights EK Eisernes Kreuz (Iron Cross)
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ECHREuropean Convention on Human RightsEKEisernes Kreuz (Iron Cross)
EK Eisernes Kreuz (Iron Cross)
Frw. Freiwillige (Voluntary)
Gestapo Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police)
Gren. Grenadier
HBS Hogere burgerschool (Higher civic school)
HJ Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth)
Hpstf. Hauptsturmführer
IG Farben Interessen-Gemeinschaft Farbenindustrie AG (Syndicate of Dyestuff-Industry Corporations AG)
KIA Killed in action
KMA Koninklijke Militaire Academie (Royal Military Academy)
Kp. Kompanie (Company)
Kpf. Kompanieführer (Company leader)
MG Maschinengewehr (Machine gun)
MP Maschinenpistole (Submachine gun)

MULO	Meer uitgebreid lager onderwijs (More extensive primary education)
NA	Nationaal Archief (National Archives)
NBI	Nederlands Beheersinstituut (Netherlands Property Administration Institute)
N.H.	Nederlands Hervormd (Dutch Reformed)
NIOD	Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation)
NJS	Nationale Jeugdstorm (National Youth Storm)
NKVD	Narodnij Komissariat Vnoetrennich Djel (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)
NSB	Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (National Socialist Movement)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NSNAP	Nationaal-Socialistische Nederlandsche Arbeiderspartij (National-Socialist Dutch Workers' Party)
NSKK	Nationalsozialistische Kraftfahrerkorps (National Socialist Motor Corps)
PaK	Panzerabwehrkanone (Anti-tank gun)
Panz.	Panzer (Tank)
PF	Procureur-Fiscaal (Public Prosecutor)
PEC	Parlementaire Enquêtecommissie (Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry)
PKW	Personenkraftwagen (Car)
POD	Politieke Opsporingsdiensten (Political Investigation Services)
POW	Prisoner of war
PRA	Politieke Recherche Afdelingen (Political Investigation Departments)
PRAC	Politieke Recherche Afdelingen Collaboratie (Political Investigation Departments Collaboration)
PVV	Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom)
Rgt.	Regiment

RIOD	Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (National Institute for War Documentation)
RM	Reichsmark
SA	Sturmabteilung (Storm Detachment)
SS	Schutzstaffel (Protection Squadron)
STPD	Stichting Toezicht Politieke Delinquenten (Foundation for the Supervision of Political Delinquents)
Stuka	Sturzkampfflugzeug (Dive bomber)
TBC	Tuberculose (Tuberculosis)
Ushf.	Unterscharführer
Verdinaso	Verbond van Dietsche Nationaal Solidaristen (Union of Diets National Solidarists)
VNV	Vlaamsch Nationaal Verbond (Flemish National Alliance)
VPRO	Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep (Liberal Protestant Radio Broadcasting Association)
WA	Weerbaarheidsafdeling (Defensibility department)
WW2	World War 2

Ego documents

This research is largely based on ego documents, mainly diaries, written by nineteen Dutch volunteers in the Waffen-SS. Below, their known backgrounds, which time periods are described and what kind of ego document it concerns are briefly outlined. These descriptions are mainly based on the ego documents, supplemented where possible with information from the Dutch National Archive and relevant other sources. The authors are listed in order of time at which the periods they describe commence.

The names of the writers are fictitious in cases where the sources are not entirely public. This is due to the responsibility of the researcher in the context of disclosing sensitive information to data subjects. The first two letters of the pseudonyms used correspond to the real surnames. Subsequently, a random choice was made for more frequently occurring Dutch surnames. These are not related in any way to other Dutchmen who have served in the Waffen-SS. Efforts have been made to protect their identity as much as possible, insofar as this was not contrary to the scientific value and disclosure of data was not necessary in this respect.¹ The scientific, historical value of the ego documents and files that were researched has always been leading.

Ansink²

Born:	1919 in Rotterdam.
Described period:	1919 -1946.
Form:	Postwar report, handwritten.
Size:	113 pages.
Recorded:	March-April 1946; in prison for political detainees in Scheveningen.

At the age of three Ansink lost his father, who held a high ranking position at Jacobson Van den Berg, a large trading company headquartered in Rotterdam, focused on the trade in various colonial products from the Dutch East Indies. Within five years, there was little left of their wealthy position. His mother remarried and Ansink had a good relation with his stepfather, who restored

¹ As far as the birth data of the volunteers are concerned, only the year and place of birth are mentioned (as far as known). With the exception of Metz whose diary is completely public. His diary was published in 2005.

² NIOD. Access number 244. Archive title: Europese dagboeken en Egodocumenten. No. 968, Anonymous.

their financial position. After three successful years at the HBS (higher civic school) he refused further study, thinking that he immediately wanted to start earning money himself. However, in varying, rapidly succeeding occupations he achieved little success. At the age of seventeen, he travelled westwards for five months as a working passenger on a ship to South America, Central America and the West Indies. Ansink probably joined the Dutch army as a conscript in November 1938 with the prestigious Gele Rijders (Yellow Riders, mobile artillery). After his demobilization, he was first unemployed. His house in Rotterdam was destroyed by the bombardment of May 1940. He ended up at the Opbouwdienst (Reconstruction Service for ex-militaries)³ and in that period he developed into a National Socialist, but only became a member of the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (National Socialist Movement, NSB) at the end of 1943. He held a number of mainly administrative positions with the Nederlandse Landstand (an NSB farmers' organization with the task of taking care of the Dutch food supply)⁴ and then with the Nederlands Arbeidsfront (Dutch Workers' Front)⁵, until he joined the Germanic SS in the Netherlands (Dutch SS) in April 1944. The Dutch SS was not directly military and was a

³ The Nederlandse Opbouwdienst was founded on 15 July 1940 by the government at that time. It was a transitional organization for the dismantling of the Dutch army in times of occupation and/or crisis. The Opbouwdienst was intended to prevent a further increase in the unemployment rate.

L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog IV, mei '40 – maart '41, tweede helft*, The Hague 1972, 618-626.

⁴ The Nederlandse Landstand was an organisation that came into being in October 1941 as a result of the merger of the Boerenfront and the Nationale Bond Landbouw en Maatschappij. One of the tasks of the organization was to ensure the supply of food to the Dutch population. It was also responsible for promoting the interests of farmers, fishermen and market gardeners. In 1942, the Association of Landowners also merged into the Dutch Land Agency.

L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog VI, juli '42 – mei '43, eerste helft*, The Hague 1975, 461- 468.

⁵ The Nederlands Arbeidsfront (Dutch Workers' Front) was a national-socialist trade union federation founded on 1 May 1942 by the national commissioner Arthur Seyss-Inquart. All other unions in the Netherlands were dissolved. The possessions and assets of the dissolved trade union confederations were to be transferred to the Arbeidsfront. The head of the organization was NSB member Hendrik Jan Woudenberg.

The objective of the organization: The task of the Nederlandsche Arbeidsfront is to bring together all Dutch people who earn a living wholly or partly from their own work, to care for them, to educate them to mutual understanding for their economic interests, as well as for their social and cultural needs, and to cooperate in meeting these needs.

L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog VI, juli '42 – mei '43, eerste helft*, The Hague 1975, 458 - 461.

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