



## DUTCH BRIEFING

### BACKGROUND

During WWI the Netherlands neutrality had been respected and the country had profited greatly. If suffering a little through the blockade as well. The Netherlands had in fact not been involved in a war in Europe for over a century. During the 1920s' and 30s' the government spent the minimum possible on the nation's armed forces, the navy receiving the lion's share as it was the main defender of the Dutch East Indies.

As for weapons, there has been a very, very gradual improvement, however the rifle is still a light weight 6.5mm 1895 model Mannlicher, the light machine gun in service is an antiquated Lewis M20 and the heavy machine gun an old but serviceable Schwarzlose M08/15. In the area of support weapons the situation is considerably better as most of these are modern, the mortars are French Brandt and the anti-tank guns either German 37mm Pak36 or Austrian 47mm Bohler M-31, and the Dutch Army is fairly lavishly equipped with anti-tank guns. The Artillery is, very gradually, being re-equipped with all the light guns replaced in the late 20s'/early 30s' and most of the heavier guns replaced in the late 30s'. The howitzers in service are all of WWI vintage and the lighter ones are to be replaced with modern German weapons, some of which have already been delivered. For such a small land area the Netherlands is very well equipped with anti-aircraft weapons. There has been virtually no investment in AFVs' and what few there are are armoured cars or tankettes.

The Air Forces are basically equipped with obsolete or obsolescent types backing up a very small group of modern and efficient aircraft. However, the Fokker concern, who normally supply your combat aircraft, cannot meet all your current needs as American aircraft are being purchased for the Netherlands East Indies Air Forces as well as the domestic Air Forces.

The Navy, and in particular the Netherlands East Indies, is receiving the lions share of the military budget because from 1937 Japan was seen as a threat following its' invasion of China. The Netherlands, being neutral in Europe, do not see Germany as being a threat.

In July 1938 the Netherlands along with Belgium, Luxembourg, the Scandinavian countries and the Baltic States signed the Copenhagen declaration of neutrality, and on 23 August 1939 King Leopold of Belgium, on behalf of the Copenhagen signatories, appealed for peace. Following the outbreak of war the Netherlands went about its business despite warnings that Germany would violate her neutrality. Only following explicit information given by honourable German officers did the Dutch government mobilise their forces in April 1940, and having been given this prior warning put their forces on a state of alert from early on the morning of 10 May 1940.

### The Field Army

II Army Corps:-  
2nd.Regular Infantry Division  
4th.Regular Infantry Division

III Army Corps:- (HQ - Vught)  
5th.Regular Infantry Division  
6th.Regular Infantry Division

IV Army Corps:-  
7th.Regular Infantry Division  
8th.Regular Infantry Division

Corps troops:-  
1st.Hussar Regiment  
5th.Hussar Regiment

"Light" (Regular) Division

Brigade "A" (2 Territorial Infantry Regiments)  
Brigade "B" (2 Reserve Infantry Regiments)  
Brigade "G" (1 Reserve & 1 Territorial Infantry Regiment, each minus 1 Battalion)

"Peel" Division (2 Reserve & 1 Territorial Infantry Regiment, minus 2 Territorial Battalions)

The Army Reserve  
I Army Corps:- (HQ - s'Gravenhage)  
1st.Regular Infantry Division  
3rd.Regular Infantry Division

The Field Army is deployed in the Grebbe-Peel Line, a defence line prepared to provide a shield for the main body of the Netherlands and which can be held long enough for Anglo-French forces to come to the aid of Holland. The Grebbe Line extends from the Zuider Zee south along the Geld Valley to the Maas-Waal-Lek estuaries, much of this area can be flooded if necessary, and the Peel extension runs on south through the Peel River marshes and along the Zuid Willems Canal to the Belgian border near Weert. This is a modern construction and to augment the strong natural and man-made water defences an extensive system of fortifications, bunkers, artillery emplacements and anti-tank obstacles have been prepared, although these are more extensive in the Grebbe Line as the Peel extension has only recently been prepared and is not regarded as complete. It is expected that these defence lines are deep and strong enough to absorb an attack without being penetrated.

The Grebbe Line from the Zuider Zee to the Lek is held by the IV & II Army Corps, in that order from the north, with the Divisions holding roughly equal frontages and being from the north 7th, 8th, 2nd & 4th. Between the Lek and the Waal is Brigade "A" with Brigade "G" in support and between the Waal and the Maas is Brigade "B".

The Peel extension is held by the remainder of the Field Army with III Army Corps holding the northern most 30 kilometres, with 6th.Division in the north and 5th.Division in the south of the Corps area. The line south of this to the Belgian border is held by the "Peel" Division backed up by the "Light" Division which is quartered from Eindhoven back to Breda.

This Corps is within the bounds of Vesting Holland and in a position to strengthen any part of the country threatened by aggressors. The Divisions are deployed such that 1st.Division takes in an area from the Hook northwards to the area of Leiden incorporating Valkenburg, Delft, Ypenburg and s'Gravenhage, the 3rd.Division takes in an area northwards from Leiden to IJmuiden incorporating Haarlem.

### **The Territorial Commands**

These commands are effectively border commands and are in front of the main defence positions of the Grebbe/Peel line and Vesting Holland. There are six commands and two groups, these start in the North-West with the Den Helder command, HQ - Den Helder, which covers the northern part of Vesting Holland, the West Frisian Islands and the Western end of the Great Dyke. Covering the Eastern border of Holland are, from the north, the commands of Friesland, HQ - Groningen, covering from the North Sea southwards to Coevorden, the command of Upper IJssel, HQ - Apeldoorn, covering from Coevorden to Arnhem, the group Betuwe covering from Arnhem to Nijmegen, the group Maas-Waal covering from Nijmegen to a point on the

border opposite Goch (in Germany), the command of North Brabant, HQ - Helmond, covering from Goch southwards to Maasbracht and the command of South Limburg, HQ - Maastricht, the only Dutch forces in the Maastricht appendix. There is also the command of Zeeland, HQ - Middelburg, which is centred on the islands of Beveland and Walcheren.

### **Fortress or Vesting Holland**

The defences of Vesting Holland run southwards from the Zuider Zee in the area of Muiden, keeping to the west of Naarden, Bussum and Hilversum and then curves round to the east to incorporate Utrecht into the defended zone before curving back to the south to cross the Lek and reach the Waal to the east of Gorinchem, the line then follows the Waal westwards to the sea. Certain vital coastal areas were also regarded as part of Vesting Holland.

The following "Groups" are detailed under the mobilisation plan to be the defending forces, on the east front opposite Naarden - Group Naarden, opposite Hilversum - Group Nieuwersluis, around Utrecht - Group Utrecht, astride the Lek - Group Lek, and, forming the junction between the eastern and southern fronts, around Gorinchem - Group Merewede. On the southern front, covering the approaches to Rotterdam, around Dordrecht - Group Kil, and south-west of Rotterdam - Group Spui. On the so called west front, or coastal and interior region, were the following Groups, covering the Hook of Holland and garrisoning Rotterdam - Group Hoek van Holland, covering the port of IJmuiden - Group IJmuiden, and in Amsterdam itself - Group Amsterdam.

### **ARMY AIR FORCE:-**

In 1937/8 the Dutch Air Force became a semi-independent arm of the Army and incorporated the anti-aircraft artillery, searchlight sections and air observer corps. The whole being designated Air Defence Command.

### **NAVAL AIR SERVICE:-**

Operationally the Dutch Naval Air Service has 53 serviceable aircraft in the Netherlands. Of these 24 are Koolhoven F.K.51's and 20 are Fokker C.XI W, the latter being floatplanes, used for observation and coastal patrol. The only effective aircraft the Naval Air Service have are 9 modern purpose built twin engine monoplanes, Fokker T.VIII W/G.

There have been a number of "regrettable" incidents which have resulted in the loss of Dutch aircraft, mainly suffered by this service as it patrols the Frisian Islands, and as a result of this the different and distinctive Dutch roundel has been replaced by an orange triangle on all Dutch aircraft. The Germans can no longer say "they mistook the aircraft markings for English or French".

### **NAVY**

The forces available are as follows:-

- 4 Cruisers
- 8 Destroyers
- 23 Submarines
- 7 Escort and Patrol Vessels
- 5 Motor Torpedo Boats
- 28 Minesweepers

### **MARINES**

Besides the two Battalions of Marines, which are regarded as part of the Army, the training organisation of the Dutch Marines is part of the Rotterdam garrison and is a regimental size force (1140 men).

### **COASTAL ARTILLERY:-**

There are a number of batteries of coastal artillery and these are sited to cover obvious avenues to safe landing points on the Dutch coast. The major batteries are, from north to south:-

- 1: at the northern end of the island south of Terschelling
- 2: at the southern end of Texel island

- 3: at Den Helder
- 4: at IJmuiden
- 5: at Hoek van Holland
- 6: 2 at the coast south of Brielle
- 7: upstream from 6 and south-west of Dordrecht
- 8: at the western end of Walcheren Island

#### OVERALL STRATEGY

The Den Helder Command is responsible for the defence of the Frisian Islands, the Den Helder peninsula and the western end of the Great Dyke. The Friesland Command is responsible for the defence of the provinces of Drenthe, Groningen and Friesland but as the High Command has never regarded these areas as defensible the forces in this area are to fight a delaying action and fall back if pressed to form a bridgehead at the eastern end of the Great Dyke around the town of Woms.

The Zeeland Command is responsible for the defence of the islands in the estuary of the Scheldt-Maas-Rijn. The South Limburg command is responsible for the defence of that province and this area has also always been regarded as indefensible, therefore the forces in this province are to fight a delaying action and fall back on the city of Maastricht and endeavour to hold out until Anglo-French or Belgian forces come to their aid.

On the main front the commands of Upper IJssel and North Brabant and the Groups Betuwe and Maas-Waal are charged with the defence of the border with Germany facing them and to fight a delaying action, destroying bridges, etc. and fighting on river lines where prepared positions exist, in general buying time for the Field Army to take up position in the Grebbe/Peel Line.

The Grebbe/Peel Line will be held by the Field Army but is not seen as the place for a last ditch stand. It is expected to hold the Germans for a period of 6 or 7 days on this line, by which time Anglo-French forces will have reached the front through Belgium and the tide of battle will then turn.

Behind the Grebbe/Peel Line is the national redoubt, Fortress Holland, and although the defences are older than those of the Grebbe/Peel Line, if, in the event of some unforeseen eventuality, the entire Dutch Field Army were to occupy the defence line it would prove a very formidable prospect.

#### MILITARY ASSETS IN THE GAME:-

The military assets that will be available to the Dutch CinC in the game are as follows:-

- 4 Corps Head Quarters (I to IV)
- 8 Regular Infantry Divisions (1 to 8)
- 1 Regular Mobile Division (Light)
- 1 ad hoc Division (Peel)
- 3 reinforced Brigades (A, B & G)

- 1 Air Reconnaissance Unit
- 1 Air Fighter Unit
- 1 Air Bomber Unit

## Royal Netherlands Army, 1st ARMY

| Unit           | Orders  |   | Intentions       |
|----------------|---|---|------------------|
| 1 Division     | Defend the Hague and airfield   | If airborne attacks near The Hague and Rotterdam, 1 Division will defend The Hague first, and secondly Rotterdam bridges.   | HOLD             |
| 2 Division     | Defend at the Grebbeline, behind Inundated land, below Amersfoort                       |   | HOLD             |
| 3 Division     | Defend Amsterdam and airfield   | If airborne attacks near Amsterdam, 3 Division will defend Amsterdam & airfield, If Kornwerderzand falls, 3 Division will defend Afstluitdijk & Den Helder and fall back on Vesting Holland | HOLD             |
| 4 Division     | Defend at the Grebbeline, behind Inundated land, from Grebbeberg/up 2 <sup>nd</sup> div |   | HOLD             |
| 5 Division     | Defend at Peel-Raam line, until Mill  |   | HOLD             |
| 6 Division     | Around 'sHertogenbosch. Tactical behind SouthWillemsvaart.                              | If there are breakthroughs in the A or B Brigades or the 5 <sup>th</sup> division, the 6 Division can defend those gaps.  | Tactical Reserve |
| 7 Division     | Defend at the Grebbeline, behind Inundated land, above Amersfoort and the IJsselmeer.   |   | HOLD             |
| 8 Division     | Defend at the Grebbeline, behind Inundated land, around Amersfoort (inclusive)          |   | HOLD             |
| Peel Division  | Defend at Peel-Raam line, from Mill to the South  |   | HOLD             |
| Light Division | Below Eindhoven, Tactical reserve behind the South Willemsvaart, behind Peel-Raam line  | If there are breakthroughs in the Peel division, the Light Division can defend those gaps   | Tactical Reserve |
|                |   |   |                  |
| A Brigade      | Defend at the Maas-Waal line, between Rhine and Waal.                                   |   | HOLD             |
| B Brigade      | Defend at the Maas-Waal line, between Waal and Maas.                                    |   | HOLD             |
| G Brigade      | Defend Dordrecht Area   | If airborne attacks near Dordrecht, G-brigade will defend Dordrecht- and Moerdijkbridges  | Tactical Reserve |
|                |   |   |                  |

**Special:**

The Grebbeline will be inundated!

Area Commands Blow all bridges. Battalions destroy all bridges in their forward areas, then cause delaying actions.

Special password is sent to all commands and brigades: cue is Scheveningen and answer is schokland.

If this answer is not given, sound the alarm.

**Royal Dutch Air Force**

| UNITS ALLOCATED / BASED AT. | ARMY TO SUPPORT (CAP or CAS) | ORDERS / TARGETS / RECCE GRID SQUARES   | Intentions |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1 Fighter Wing<br>Haarlem   | Dutch Army                   | CAP over Dutch Army at the Grebbeline, the Waal-Maas line and the Peel-Raam line. | CAP        |
| 1 Bomber Wing,<br>Amsterdam | Dutch Army                   | CAS over Dutch Army at the Grebbeline, the Waal-Maas line and the Peel-Raam line. | CAS        |
| 1 Recon Wing,<br>The Hague  | Dutch Army                   | CAP over Dutch Army at the Waal-Maas line and the Peel-Raam line.                 | Recon      |

**Royal Dutch Navy**

| UNITS ALLOCATED /BASED AT.                 | ARMY TO SUPPORT | ORDERS / TARGETS / RECCE GRID SQUARES                                | Intentions |
|--|-----------------|--|------------|
| Minesweepers/Destroyer / MTBs at Rotterdam | Dutch Army      | CAS Dutch Army at Rotterdam, Minesweepers clear canals and waterways | Support    |
| Destroyer/Escorts/MTBs at Den Helder       | Dutch Army      | CAS Dutch Army at Kornwerderzand                                     | Support    |
| Coastal artillery                          | Dutch Army      | CAS Dutch Army if possible.  | Support    |



