

Ancestors in the Dutch Army
before Napoleon

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Ladies and Gentleman,

My speech concerns ancestors who served in the army of the Dutch republic and its successors.

Overview

- Sources
 - Archives Groningen, Maastricht, The Hague
 - Specific Military sources NL and other abroad
- History of The Netherlands 1713-1813
 - Staatse Leger (State Army, Armee de l'Etat)
 - Vassal Nation and rebirth of sovereignty
- Impact on PALMEN family
- Recommendations and Conclusions

My research is mainly based on sources in Dutch archives abroad and going back in time 250 years.

I consulted quite a few military sources and will introduce you to the whereabouts of the State Army between 1713-1813.

The impact of the military service on the PALMEN family of my wife will serve as an example.

Groningen, January 20, 1811

- Johannes Palmen (born Maastricht) marries Neeltje Gosen Kampinga; both 20 years
- Johannes is oldest known ancestor of the Groningen branch; **no parents known**
- Poulterer/Poulaier at the Vischmarkt
- Website "Alle Groningers" published Palmen story at the occasion of the 200th anniversary of "Etat Civil" in 2011

It is just 7 years ago that I consolidated a very first line of descent starting with Johannes Palmen an ancestor of my wife in the father's line.

My wife and I had to visit the regional archive in Groningen to get information about 5 generations of here ancestors living there.

With friendly assistance we got paper copies of the family cards as the computer was available that day.

What struck most was the discovery that Neeltje after become a widow had sound business reasons to married a second time. The young widow had run a pouterer shop at The Vischmarkt an had to bring up 5 children from here first marriage.

The place of birth of Johannes Palmen turned out not to be Maastricht ! A first account how this mystery was unraveled appeared last year

At the website "Alle Groningers".

The date of marriage being 20 january 1811 this was one of the first registered in the Civil Register.

Groninger Vischmarkt

Maastricht, May 14, 1780

Military Marriages “Collection Wolters” shows

Johannes Palmen marries Catharina Kugels

- Church: Dutch Reformed (by law)
- Consent: *Prince van Hessen-Cassel*
- Position: Dragoneer

no registration of parents

The suggestion of Geert Kamphuis was to write a letter with some details to Mr Wolters from Maarsen who had made a collection of military marriages as found in 17th and 18th morderriage registers of the Dutch Reformed church throughout the Netherland.

In a return letter of December 2005 Mr Wolters gives the marital record information from Maastricht of another Johannes Palmen who very well could be the father of the Groninger Johannes.

As the regiment and position are clearly stated he further recommended to investigate the papers of this regiment in the National Archive.

Dragonderwacht / St.Janskerk

Staatse Leger (1579-1795)

The United Provinces agree in 1579 (Unie van Utrecht) on a commonly funded standing army called "**Staatse Leger**"

This army consists of national and foreign regiments ("subsidietroepen")

Individual soldiers are contracted
(no obligatory service/conscription)

Overall 50% foreigners !!!

Since becoming an independent republic the Netherlands had a relatively large army at its disposal.

Dependant on the threats from the big powers such as England, Spain, Austria and France set up alliances and paid foreign troops coming typically from smaller countries and kingdoms. On top of that foreign individuals could also be contracted a on an individual basis for terms of 2 up to 8 years of service in the regiments of the Dutch provinces.

The whole of this army both foreign and national troops were called "Staatse Leger" as the Raad van State practically was in charge of appointing commanders and high-ranking officers, but foremost agreed the rules for financing this huge military presence with the provinces.

There was a high morale among the troops as conscription or obligatory services was ruled out.

Consistently over a period of almost 150 years less than 50% of the troops were of Dutch origin.

“Golden Age” terminates 1713

Utrecht treaty : “chez vous, sur vous et sans vous “

- **Barrier cities** in foreign territory get Dutch garrisons a.o. Namur, Tournai
- Regular 2-3 year displacements of all troupes among all garrison cities
- Van Hessen-Kassel dragoon regiment essential in defense of Maastricht throughout 18th century: FvH-K Governor of Maastricht

1713

After the end of the Spanish succession war several treaties redefined the map of Europe.

In the Utrecht Treaty the United Province of the Netherlands lose the southern provinces to Austria but keeps control of the Barrier cities : Namur, Tournai, Menen, Furnon, Warneton, Ieper and Termonde.

A defensive circle of fortified cities including also Embden, Bourlange, Coevorden, Rees, Wesel at the Eastern borders now houses garrisons with troops on 6-years contracts and whole regiments regularly transferred from one city to another to keep men alert .

Marriage normally is only permitted in the second 6-year contract period, with full consent of the head of regiment.

The threat from Spain and Austria now was replaced by possible expansionism of France and Prussia. Therefore a standing army was kept of 40-60.000 soldiers recruited from all over Europe (Scots, Swiss, Germans, Walloons, French, Italians and Polish) and commanded by the best military from the aristocratic elites in these countries.

Although the Golden Age now had ended financial resources were still available to keep this force until 1795. At its culmination point in ...

It had 120.000 troupes.

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National Archive/Raad van State

- Access Number 1.01.19 enlists contents by Regiment and shows **INVENTORY NUMBER**
- **1945II Rep H** : Nederlandse Regimenten Dragoners Frederik van Hessen-Kassel its contents are:
 - » Recruitment lists *
 - » Stamboek, promotion, change of regiment
 - » Correspondence, conduct report
 - » Exercise lists, (incl. "rangeerlijst")
 - » Dismission, Pension register

** Johannes place of birth Vlodrop is a hoax !!!*

Now turning back to the military position of Johannes as found in Maastricht.

The books of the national Hessen-Kassel dragoon regiment were readily found in The Hague and more important a recruitment list showing his name and place of birth.

On the 27th of march 1776 he has the age of 27, gets a contract of 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ years and states that his place of birth is Vlodrop.

Now there live quite a few Palmen families still today in Vlodrop and vicinity and with some help of the local genealogist all the options where checked but not a single Johannes our own ingenuity turned up in this region.

Once again the birth registration turned out to be a hoax.

No further advice being available we tried to search for Johannes in a much wider region.

NGV and sister organizations

- Dutch Genealogy Association (NGV)
 - Vlaamse Vereniging voor Familiekunde (VVF)
 - Westdeutsche Gesellschaft fuer Familienkunde
- all have REGIONAL DEPARTMENTS providing guidance , specific local collections and library

Facilitating access to current experience, but with limited cross-border scope

At the time we started to search in a wider cross-border region typically large collection of church-registers could be searched were made available on CD's.

Apart from being far from complete these collections were difficult to search. The only on-line cross-border collection that could be searched

Was that of the mormons, which turned out to be far from complete as well.

Our experiences led us to be supportive to local and cross-border genealogical events, such as the First Inter-Limburg Contact Day held 20 march 2011.

So what did we find in this way ?

Collection indexes BMD (Erkelenz)
+ Microfilms Mormons (Heerlen)

- birth of **Joannes Josephus (Jean Joseph)**
 - Baptism Sankt Dionysius 19-3-1790
 - Son of **Joannes Conradus and Catharina Kugels**
 - Brother of Helena Catharina, U-P, 2-6-1786
 - Mother dies in U-P 3-3-1792
 - 5 generations in **Uebach-Palenberg** (Aachen)
- Death of father not found**

The index of birth in the Erkelenzer collection showed finally the birth of Joannes Josephus out of parents who undoubtedly can be identified as the couple marrying in Maastricht 10 years before.

Actually it took them 6 years to produce their first child. We cannot exclude child births at other places than Maastricht or Uebach-Palenberg.

Uebach-Palenberg is the German sister town of Uebach-over-Worms and will come to the Departement de la Meuse Inferieure after the French invasion of 1794

A search in the orphan register of two institutions in Maastricht did not give results.

Most importantly we readily could track 5 generations of PALMEN and due to the services of Microfilm rental we could have easy access to the original church records.

The death of Joannes Conradus has not been found yet. There might be some clues however in the history of military operations of these days.

Vassal nation prolongs sovereignty

- 1794 Fall of Maastricht, Den Bosch
Southern Provinces become French
- 1795 Willem V, hereditary "Stadhouder" flees to England
Bataafsche Republiek : **Patriots** take over
- 1806 French troops conquer Northern provinces once again
Kingdom Holland: **Louis Bonaparte** governs
- Royal Dutch Army** : Hollandse Brigade gives assistance to French military operations

1795

The impact of the American Freedom wars and the French revolution led the French-oriented Patriots to seize control of the state even before French troops were able to confirm the new balance of power. The French recognize this "Bataafsche Republiek", but effectively treat it as a French protectorate. The Austrian southern provinces and the age-long neutral principality of Liege, that included large parts of the present provinces of Flemish and Dutch Limburg are readily annexed by France.

England reacts by an effective blockade of Dutch fishery and sea trade, while seizing most of its colonies.

1806

By appointment of Louis Bonaparte – one of a number of Napoleonic satraps ruling various parts of Europe- the Netherlands oddly enough had their first king installed with Hortense de Beauharnais, a born Mauritian, as its first Queen.

The country remained de jure independent but in practice was drawn into the Napoleonic wars in a big way both financially, in providing supplies and not the least by the contribution of Dutch brigades in several campaigns. First attempts to install a "levee de masse" in 1808 were held back

Kingdom born out of revolution

1810 Napoleon blockade against England
all provinces annexed and restructured
into French departments

Dutch Corpses become subordinated

1813 Treaty of Vienna redraws the map
Kingdom of the Netherlands:

William I of Orange reestablishes army

1810

When Napoleon did not get what he wanted he simply send off his brother and annexed Holland. At that moment their were 19.000 active troops within its territory and already 9000 abroad, participating in campaigns in Germany and Spain.

1813

The Nothern and Southern Netherlands were reunited once again. Including now also the old Princedom of Liege. The first ruler from the House of Orange was proclaimed King of the reunited Netherlands.

The remains of the army were 1350 infantry, 200 cavalry and 5 cannons.

Nevertheless, Chasse,the general who had taken the Dutch Brigade to Spain, did not fail to make an impact at Waterloo making a decive blow to the French garde troupes at a moment the British were lacking ammunition for their cannons.

Victim of the Spanish War

On line access to person index has become partially available for National Archive

- Test in January 2012 located pension record of Johannes Palmen of March 1810:
- Copy ordered (20 euro) shows:
Dismissed from 1st line infantry regiment due to ***wounds acquired in Spain***

The Dutch National Archives until recently had very limited on-line search facilities.

When preparing for this conference we found a pension record of Johannes Palmen at an unexpected date.

The simple line “wounds acquired in Spain” together with the date made a historical reconstruction of his fate possible.

Spanish Adventure

- Departure of 4000 man in “Hollandse Brigade” under General Chasse , September 1809
- Showing of the troops in front of Hortense de Beauharnais / Napoleon, September 1809
- Guerilla-fighting carries on until 1812, when decimated troops (900) return to Holland
- Joannes returns with ambulance, march 1810

Various sources Dutch, French, Spanish, English and German sources have recently be used by two authors from Leiden University in a full reconstruction of the Dutch participation in the Spanish campaign of the French troops of Napoleon.

Although Napoleon urged his brother to send 10.000 man in September 1809 a Dutch Brigade of 4000 set foot direction Paris and later Bayonne.

This campaign turned into a disaster. But the start was very well enacted indeed with showing of the troops on two consecutive days in Paris.

The first battle, that of Durango was won and General Chasse readily received the Legion d’Honneur. But the winter of 1809-1810 turned out to be killing. No battles could be fought. The Spanish reverted to guerilla tactics continuing until 1812 when less then 25% of the troops returned to Holland.

Joannes was wounded in early 1810 and was lucky to return to Holland by joining the ambulance in march of that year.

Talavera

Specific services and tools

- Public Archives (National, Maastricht, Groningen)
- Private collections (eg Wolters) and records (eg diaries)

- Communications with peer genealogists
(Member sites :NGV, Coret sig's, Weblogs)
- as facilitated by the Internet/Google

- Army Library, Museum (Breda, Delft)
- Reference Books and Websites (MilWiki)

In our experience we have not come across much experience and knowledge either in local genealogical societies or archives about the military resources available.

It took quite some time and perseverance to get into dialogue initially with knowledgeable persons. This was essential in uncovering the existence of some public data and private collections.

In the mean time a number of weblogs on more general military interests have emerged. To my knowledge in the Netherlands currently only one special interest group on military genealogy is active as a Forum on Bob Coret's genealogy website.

In the last phase of this research I was able to get some hints from the Army Museum in Delft and to check my findings on the Spanish campaign with the Dutch Institute for Military History in the Hague however.

In the few years between the start of our research in 2005 and this year a phenomenal amount of data has become available through the Internet.

In the Netherlands public genealogy websites are active in providing access to their collections. In the Netherlands public genealogy websites are active in providing access to their collections. In the Netherlands public genealogy websites are active in providing access to their collections.

PALMEN family findings summary

- 6 generations are known to wear the uniform
- Reason for migration to Groningen uncovered

- PALMEN homeland crosses borders B, NL, D

- Two coat of arms in Tongeren 17th century
- Oldest records found in Maastricht 13th century "Burgerboek"

Our research has traced back the roots of the Groninger Palmen family. The oldest records being that of the birth of Anna Palmen in 1653 in Ubach-Palenberg.

From the ten generations reported 6 wear the uniform of military or civil organization.

We think the reason for migration to Groningen initially to be the opportunity to enter military service there. It could very well be that the little Johannes stayed already as an infant in his father's regiment and was transferred due to reorganization to Groningen. Certainly we did not find any record of presence in the two big orphan's houses in Maastricht.

As many family names in the low countries the spread of the PALMEN is confined to geographical small area. At the same time it came not as a big surprise to see that this homeland crosses the boundaries in the Euregio spanned by the cities of Liege, Aachen and Maastricht.

(and Roermond and Heinsberg in the north)

What is interesting however that we found two coat of arms in use in the 17th century in Tongeren. From the six PALMEN registrations for workmanship and trade in the Maastricht Burgerboek in the 13th century half comes from Tongeren, the very old Roman headquarters in this area.

Recommandations

Search of Military in "Staatse Leger" by

1. regiment, company (NL, foreign)
2. Name (database)
3. Location, year of marriage (index Wolters)
4. Pension register

Relevant data military movements

5. Website (after Ringoir)

We have shown that the individual researcher looking for information on ancestors in the Dutch Army before 1813 has several options to start his search dependant on his a priori knowledge.

In the Netherlands the National Archives increasingly allow acces and on-line search through their records. (option 1-3)

However we found the Wolters index of military marriages to be indispensable and are looking forward to have this digitized as well.

Another private initiative is the website showing military movements based on a whole series of studie of Ringoir.

General Conclusions

Marital records of Military carry essential information

Military movements known across Europe

Historical framework helps to interpret events and enhances relevance

Insight in impact of military operations on the lives of civilians and soldiers can be deepened.

Today I've tried to put a personal history of two generations of military in some perspective.

My research shows that with currently available tools and methods insight in the impact of military operations on the lives of civilians and soldiers can be deepened.

In the case of the PALMEN family it was crucial to find a marriage in Militaire in Maastricht.

It further was shown that military movements and campaigns can be reconstructed throughout Europe taking both archival data and reports of all kind, including diaries, into account. The relevant historical sources create a framework for interpretation of the life events.

It is my strong belief that the sheer magnitude of Military operations throughout European history justifies international cooperation between Archives and related bodies to enhance multi-lingual access to their resources and deploy other tools facilitating the individual researcher.