Inception and organization

Because of a Dutch government degree in December 1830 the army in the Dutch East-Indies became an organization separated from the regular Dutch army in Europe. From then this armed force were governed by the colonial authorities autonomously. In December 1830 the East-Indian army comprised eight mobile battalions each consisting of two European and four Native companies. In addition there was a depot company from which the battalions on Java and on the other islands were completed as well as a special depot company on behalf of the artillery, two companies pioneers (engineers, sappers), cavalry and mountain artillery.

In 1839, on the occasion of the introduction three new battalions, new regimental colours with the text “Koninklijk Nederlands Oost-Indisch Leger” (Royal Dutch East-Indian Army) were introduced. In 1840 the East-Indian infantry was made up of sixteen European, nine African (from Dutch Ghana), seventeen Amboinese and forty native companies.

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In 1940 the mobilized KNIL counted 40,000 professional soldiers and 20,000 home reserves (landstorm) as well as conscripts. In the same year the army command tried to place orders for the delivery of 500 planes: bombers, dive bombers and fighters. The command already made a start with the motorization and mechanization of the troops on Java. The aim was to form five mobile brigades with 5,000 men and 90 tanks / armoured cars each.

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In accordance with these plans finally each brigade could consist of:
1 squadron motorized cavalry,
1 battalion tanks / armoured cars,
3 battalions motorized infantry,
1 battalion armoured anti aircraft defence,
1 detachment artillery,
1 company pioneers,
1 medical detachment,
1 car train,
1 detachment "mobile car repairs".

The delivery of the military purchases came too late. British and Americans in the Far East tried to build up their strategic reserves as well. The market was supercharged with orders. Because of the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbour the Dutch East Indian government declared war to Japan 1941 December 8 and capitulated on Java 1942 March 8. Nevertheless Dutch colonial military on Sumatra, Sulawesi, Timor and New Guinea kept up fighting until 1942 December 18. As far as possible an evacuation of troops to Australia took place. On New Guinea Dutch military resistance continued until the defeat of the Japanese in 1945.

Military operations of the Royal Dutch East-Indian Army KNIL
1816 Riots at Krawang West-Java 1817 Riots on the Moluccan Islands
1818 Riots at Cheribon / Cirebon Java 1819 Revolt at Palembang on Sumatra, riots on Celebes / Sulawesi 1821 Second expedition to Palembang
1822 Start of the Padri-revolt on West-Sumatra (around Fort De Kock / Bukit Tinggi)

Continued on lower page 4 ©2008 drs (msc) D. Teeuwen - Rendez-vous Batavia – The Netherlands
1824 Revolt at Boni on Celebes / Sulawesi
1825-1830 Java War
1827 Hostilities on Borneo with the sultan of Matam
1832 Revolt of the Chinese at Krawang West-Java

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1834 Lampong-expedition on Sumatra
1843 Efforts to destroy pirates in the archipelago
1846 First Bali-expedition
1848 Second Bali-expedition
1850 Riots at Bantam West-Java
1850 Revolt of Chinese on Borneo in the Western District (Wester Afdeling in Dutch)
1851 Expedition on Ceram (Moluccan Islands) against Amahay and Mahariko
1851 Revolt at Palembang
1851 Second Lampong-expedition on Sumatra
1853 Riots of Chinese on Borneo in the Western District (Wester Afdeling)
1854 Riots at Palembang and dependencies on Sumatra
1854 Expedition to Borneo, Western District
1856 Expedition to Tomiri (Moluccan Islands)
1856 Expedition to Mandar on Celebes / Sulawesi
1856 Riots among Chinese on Riouw

P.8 Sumatra 1942  KNIL soldiers after heavy fights with the Japanese near Palembang

1856 Third Lampong-expedition on Sumatra
1857 Expedition to Timor and Flores
1858 Punishment (tuchtiging in Dutch) of the Mountain Alfoers on Ceram (Moluccan Islands)
1858 Jambi-expedition on Sumatra
1858 Riots at Palembang
1858 Chinese riots at Cheribon / Cirebon and Krawang
1858 Expedition to Retih on East-Sunatra
1858 Riots on North-Bali
1859 Riots at Sintang on Borneo, Western District (Wester Afdeling)
1859 First Boni-expedition, Celebes / Sulawesi
1859 Riots at Palembang on Sumatra
1859-1871 Riots at Banjermasin on Borneo, Eastern and Southern District (Zuider en Ooster Afdeling)
1859 Second Boni-expedition, Celebes / Sulawesi
1860 Riots on Ceram (Moluccan Islands)
1860 Revolt of Swiss army mercenaries at Semarang
1861 Defeat of pirates on the island of Saljusu

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1862 Destruction of a pirates’ fleet near the Sangir Islands
1862 Expedition to Manipi, Tutungcan and Mandar on Celebes / Sulawesi
1863 Expedition to Nias
1863 Expedition to the Toradja area on Celebes / Sulawesi
1864 Expeditions to Sintang and Marahunu
1865 Expedition to pirates near Menado / Manado, North-Celebes / Sulawesi
1865 Riots on Ceram (Moluccan Islands)
1865 Riots at Amunthai on Borneo
1866 Expedition to Pasumah, near Palembang on Sumatra
1866 Expedition to Ceram (Moluccan Islands)
1867 Expedition to Mandar on Celebes / Sulawesi
1868 Riots on Bali
1871 Riots at Pekalongan
1872 Entanglements in Deli on Sumatra
1873 Start of the Aceh War (1903 formal end of the Aceh War)
1873 First and second expedition to Aceh
1875 Riots on Ceram (Moluccan Islands)
1876 Expedition to Siak on Sumatra
1877 Expedition to Langsar
1877 Riots on Celebes / Sulawesi, revolt of Kraang Bonto Bonto
1878 Expedition to Silindung
1878 Destruction of a nest of pirates at Manura, South-Flores
1880 Riots at Kutuardjo
1881 Riots at Takalar on Celebes / Sulawesi
1881 Riots at Benkulu and in the vicinity
1881 Revolt at Palembang
1882 Entanglements in Indragiri, East-Sumatra
1882 Riots in Dusson, East-Borneo (Zuider en Ooster Afdeling in Dutch)
1883 Riots around Tobah on Sumatra
1883 Expedition to Siak on Sumatra
1883 Riots around Palembang
1884 Expedition to Tenom, West-Sumatra
1884 Riots of Chinese at Mandar on Celebes / Sulawsi
1885 Expedition to Mandar
1885 Riots around Palembang
1885 Expedition against pirates, Eastern coast of Sumatra
1885 Armed resistance in North Celebes / Sulawesi
1885 Riots in and around Madioen
1886 Entanglements with Raja Batak on Sumatra
1887 Riots around Toba on Sumatra
1888 Riots in Bantam, West-Java as well as in Middle- and East-Java
1889 Expedition to Edi, eastern coast of Sumatra
1889 Riots around Toba on Sumatra
1889 Punishment of troublemakers around Geelvink Bay on New Guinea
1890 Expedition to Flores
1890 Expeditions to independent dwarf states on Sumatra’s western coast
1891 Expedition to Tebidah, West-Borneo (Wester Afdeling)
1892 Riots on the Aru Islands
1893 Acenese attack Dutch territory on the eastern coast of Sumatra
1893 Punishment of the Aru Islands
1894 First and second expedition to Lombok
1895 Riots at Sampang on Madura
1896 Entanglements at Melawie, West-Borneo (Wester Afdeling)
1896 Riots around Ampuang on Timor
1896 Riots on Lombok
1897 Riots on Lombok
1899 Riots at Parigi near Manado / Manado, North-Celebes / Sulawesi
1899 Continued fightings in Aceh, Dutch initiatives
1899 Chinese riots on Banka
1899 Expeditions against dwarf states on several islands in the archipelago
1900 Riots in Jambi on Sumatra
1903 Korinci-expedition
1904 Colonel Van Dalen conquers Gajo, Alas and Northern Batak on Sumatra
1905 Expedition to Boni
1906-1910 Several small expeditions in the archipelago
1906 Conquest of southern Bali
1916 Jambi-expedition
1926 Riots of communists on Sumatra and Java
1927 Riots at Tapanuli

P.11 Aceh 1898, Battle of Samalanga

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Dissolution in 1950

1941-1945 War against Japan
1946-1950 Military police actions against nationalists, abuses and massacres (butchery, often cutting up people literally, of thousands and thousands of Europeans, Indo’s (half-bloods), Chinese and even many more natives by so-called bersiap-murderers mostly worked up by Japanese)
1946-1950 and after: at the same time a civil war against Javanese superiority, according to the feelings of Indo’s, Amboinese, Menadonese, etc.
1950 July 26 Dissolution of the Royal Dutch East-Indian Army
1950 Loyal (to the Dutch and their Royal Family) Amboinese KNIL-soldiers were transhipped to The Netherlands and, on arrival there, were told that their military status had come to an end.
The dissolution of the Royal Dutch East-Indian Army leaves a nasty taste in the mouth because of this betrayal by the Dutch government. Loyal and very royalist Amboinese (and others) has been leaved to fend for themselves from that moment. Their correct nationalist aspirations to form a Republic of the South Moluccas were ignored. Thanks to a bunch of cowardice Dutch authorities. By the way: weak and cowardice authorities are a permanent problem in the Netherlands after World War II.

End of this article

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