

THE DUTCH ARMY IN 1940

The Dutch had pursued a policy of armed neutrality in 1914, and had been successful in the pursuit. There was not a great deal of reason to think, at first, that the same policy would not succeed in 1940, but by the invasion of Poland in the autumn of 1939 it was becoming clearer that Nazi Germany did not play by the same rule book as had Imperial Germany.

The Dutch Army had a considerable overseas colonial defense responsibility, and a large number of troops were deployed in the Dutch East Indies. The home army was conventional in organization and equipment, consisting mostly of infantry divisions supported by regiments of corps artillery and a few cavalry elements for scouting and screening. The army relied primarily on horse traction for movement of artillery and supplies with a few picked units relying on bicycles, motorcycles, and motor vehicles for greater mobility. There were few armored vehicles and many of them were obsolete.

The ground troops were massed in four corps, three of which were forward deployed and one of which constituted the army's strategic reserve in the Amsterdam area. Due to the sudden nature of the German attack, the deep thrusts by German mobile columns, and the use of vertical envelopment tactics on the Dutch rear, effectively the entire Dutch army was engaged almost from the outbreak of hostilities.

The mobile troops were in the process of reorganization. Four of the five cavalry regiments (1st through 4th Hussars) had been reorganized as corps mobile cavalry regiments, as shown in the accompanying organization charts. The 5th Hussars remained a horsed regiment and was attached to IV Corps. There were also two regiments of bicycle infantry and two regiments (battalions, actually) of motorcyclist grouped in the Light Division.

In all there were eight infantry divisions, a light (mobile) division, a static defense division formed from fortress units in the Peel swamp area, three separate infantry brigades, and supporting arms.

ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE DUTCH ARMY, MAY 1940

Corps	Divisions	Brigades	Cav Regt	Arty Bns	Fort Grps
I	1, 3	--	3	1/10	--
II	2, 4	A, B	4	I/12, I&II/15, I&II/19	--
III	5, 6, Light, Peel	--	2	I/11	--
IV	7, 8	--	1, 5	I/9, I&II/18,	--

				III/15	
<i>Vesting Holland</i>	--	--	1 MCHs*	--	Kil, Spui, West, Oost

Notes: * = 1st Motorcycle Hussar Regiment (detached from Light Division)
 Vesting Holland = Fortress Holland

DUTCH TOE 1 INFANTRY DIVISION, 1940

This shows the ideal strength of the infantry divisions which made up the bulk of the Dutch Army in 1940. Some divisions departed from this, and the major (or easiest) differences are noted below. In addition, a number of units were detached from one division to another during the campaign.

Components

Div	Inf Regts	Art	HMG	Eng	AT	LAA	MAA
1	Grenadier, Jager, 4	2	1, 13	--	1	1	151
2	10, 15, 22	4	2, 14	2	2	7	157
3	1, 9, 12	6	3, 15	--	3	2	152
4	8, 11, 19	8	4, 16	4	4	4	--
5	2, 13, 17	3	5, 17	5	5	9	159
6	3, 6, 14	7	6, 18	6	6	5	155
7	7, 18, 20	1	7, 9	--	7	3	153
8	5, 16, 21	5	8	8	8	8	158

Howitzers: The 1st, 2nd, 6th, and 8th Divisions used 120mm howitzers, the others 150mm. There were only two (instead of three) howitzer batteries in 3rd and 5th Divisions

Troop Quality: Regular

Morale: 7

DIVISION TROOPS		
Headquarter and Separate Companies	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Company	1 staff radio truck
		1 infantry stand
		1 light truck
	2 Heavy Machine Gun Companies, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		3 machine gun carts
	Anti-Tank Battery	1 command antitank rifle stand
		1 47L? AT gun and crew
		2 light trucks
	Medium Anti-Aircraft Battery (attached)	1 command infantry stand
		1 40L56 AA gun and crew
		2 light truck
	Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (attached)	1 command infantry stand
2 AAMG stands		
2 20L70 AA guns and crews		
5 light trucks		
Engineer Company	1 command engineer stand	
	2 engineer stands	
3 INFANTRY REGIMENTS, EACH		
Regimental Troops	Headquarters	1 mounted command stand
	Headquarters Company	1 staff telephone wagon
		1 57L? infantry gun and crew

		1 limber
		<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	Mortar Company	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 8cm mortars stand (ds)
		1 wagon
	Antitank Company	1 mounted command AT rifle stand
1 47L? AT gun and crew		
1 limber		
3 Infantry Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 command stand
	Machine Gun Company	3 MMG stands
	3 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand
		2 infantry stands
ARTILLERY REGIMENT		
	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
2 Light Artillery Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 mounted command observation stand
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 75L30 field gun and crew (ds)
1 limber		
Howitzer Battalion	Headquarters	1 mounted command observation stand
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 120L14 or 150L17 howitzer and crew (ds)
1 limber		

DUTCH TOE 2

LIGHT DIVISION, 1940

This shows the authorized strength of the only light division in Dutch service. The notes cover attachments and detachments of component units.

Armored Cars: 1st Squadron had M36 and 2nd Squadron had M38 armored cars. Both were detached from the division and used as corps troops. 1st Squadron was used for airfield defense while 2nd Squadron was split between the 1st and 4th Hussar regiments (corps cavalry).

Motorcyclists: The 1st *Regiment Huzaren Motorrijders* was detached and garrisoned Vesting Holland.

Troop Quality: Regular

Morale: 8

DIVISION TROOPS		
Headquarter and Separate Companies	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Company	1 staff radio truck
		1 infantry stand
		1 light truck
	Heavy Machine Gun Company	1 command MMG stand
		1 MMG stand
		2 light trucks
	2 Armored Car Companies (1, 2), each	1 command armored car
		2 armored cars
	Engineer Company	1 command engineer stand
		2 engineer stands
		3 light trucks
	Bridging Company	1 command engineer stand
1 engineer stand		
1 medium truck		
1 heavy truck with pontoon bridge		
1st AND 2nd BICYCLE (<i>WIELRIJDERS</i>) REGIMENTS, EACH		
Regimental Troops	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Company	1 staff radio truck
3 Bicycle Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	3 rifle companies, each	1 command bicycle infantry stand
		2 bicycle infantry stands
	Machine Gun Company	1 command weapons stand
		2 MMG stands
		3 light trucks
	Antitank Company	1 command AT rifle stand
		1 47L32 AT gun and crew
		2 light trucks
1st AND 2nd MOTORCYCLE (<i>HUZAREN MOTORRIJDERS</i>) REGIMENTS, EACH		
Composite Battalion	Headquarters	1 motorcycle command stand
	2 Motorcycle	1 motorcycle command infantry stand

	Companies, each	2 motorcycle infantry stands
	Anti-Tank Company	1 motorcycle command AT rifle stand
		2 motorcycle MMG stands
		1 47L32 AT gun and crew
		1 light truck
THE MOUNTED ARTILLERY REGIMENT		
	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply truck</i>
2 Light Artillery Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 command observation stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply truck</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 command infantry stand
		1 light truck
1 75L30 field gun and crew (ds)		
		1 truck

DUTCH TOE 3

PEEL DIVISION, 1940

This shows the strength of the Peel Division, which was a territorial defense division made up mostly of improvised defensive groups of units. The table below shows the detailed composition of the five groups which comprised the division.

Group	Headquarters	Infantry Bns	Reserve Bns	Grens Bns	Arty
Vak Schaijk	29 IR	III/14, I/6, I/3,	II/29, II/26	--	III/20
Vak Erp	41 IR	II/2, II/17, I/13,	--	15	II/20
Vak Bakel	27 IR	--	I/27, II/27, III/27, I/41 III/26	--	--
Vak Asten	30 IR	--	II/30, III/30, III/41,	2	--
Vak Weert	?	--	I/30, II/41,	4, 17	I/20

Troop Quality: Trained (Infantry from regiments numbered below 20 Regular)
Morale: 7

DIVISION TROOPS			
Headquarter and Separate Companies	Headquarters	1 command stand 1 car	
	Headquarters Company	1 staff telephone stand	
	5 INFANTRY GROUPS, EACH		
Group Troops	Headquarters	1 mounted command stand	
	Headquarters Company	1 staff telephone wagon 1-2 engineers stands (attached) 1 <i>supply wagon</i>	
	0-5 Infantry Battalions, each	Headquarters Machine Gun Company	1 command stand 3 MMG stands
	3 Infantry Companies, each		1 command infantry stand 2 infantry stands
0-5 Reserve Infantry Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 command stand	
	Machine Gun Company	2 MMG stands	
	1 Infantry Company	1 command infantry stand 1 infantry stand	
	2 Infantry Companies, each	2 infantry stands	
0-2 Territorial (Grens) Battalions	Headquarters	1 command stand	
	Weapons Company	1 MMG stand 1 weapons stand 1 47L32 AT gun and crew	
		3 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand 2 infantry stands
		Headquarters	1 mounted command stand

Battalion	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 84L27 field gun and crew (ds)
		1 limber

DUTCH TOE 4

INFANTRY BRIGADE, 1940

There were three separate infantry brigades in Dutch service in 1940, each slightly different in composition. These were army-level troops and were used to defend specific river or fortification lines. The units in each brigade are shown in the table immediately below, while the organization of the components in an ideal brigade are shown in the TO&E chart.

Components

Bde	Inf Regts	Inf Grp	Art Regt	How Bn	Bicycle Squadron	HMG	Eng	LAA	MAA
A	44, 46	Betuwe	22	III/19	6/1 RH	9	9	--	--
B	24, + III/29	Maas-Waal	16	--	3/4 RH	10	10	6	156
G	25,32*	--	--	--		--	3	--	--

*The 25th Regiment consisted of the regimental headquarters and troops, plus the III/25, III/33, and III/36 battalions. The 32nd Regiment consisted of the regimental headquarters and troops, plus the I/32, III/32, and II/42 battalions

Troop Quality: Trained

Morale: 7

BRIGADE TROOPS			
Headquarter and Separate Companies	Headquarters	1 command stand 1 car	
	Headquarters Company	1 staff telephone wagon	
	Bicycle Company	1 bicycle command infantry stand 2 bicycle infantry stands	
	Heavy Machine Gun Company	1 mounted command infantry stand 3 machine gun carts	
	Medium Anti-Aircraft Battery (attached)	1 command infantry stand 1 40L56 AA gun and crew 2 light truck	
	Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (attached)	1 command infantry stand 2 AAMG stands 2 20L? AA guns and crews 5 light trucks	
	Engineer Company	1 command engineer stand 2 engineer stands	
	2 INFANTRY REGIMENTS, EACH		
	Regimental Troops	Headquarters	1 mounted command stand
		Headquarters Company	1 staff telephone wagon 1 57L? infantry gun and crew 1 limber 1 supply wagon
		Mortar Company	1 mounted command infantry stand 1 8cm mortars stand (ds) 1 wagon
		Antitank Company	1 mounted command AT rifle stand 1 47L? AT gun and crew

		1 limber
3 Infantry Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 command stand
	Machine Gun Company	2 MMG stands
	3 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand 2 infantry stands
0-1 RIVERLINE DEFENSE INFANTRY GROUP (ATTACHED)		
Group Troops	Headquarters	1 mounted command stand
Infantry Battalion	Headquarters	1 command stand
	Machine Gun Company	2 MMG stands
	3 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand 2 infantry stands
Territorial (Grens) Battalion	Headquarters	1 command stand
	Weapons Company	1 MMG stand
		1 weapons stand
		1 47L32 AT gun and crew
3 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand 2 infantry stands	
ARTILLERY REGIMENT		
	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
2 Light Artillery Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 mounted command observation stand
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 75L30 field gun and crew (ds)
		1 limber
Howitzer Battalion (attached)	Headquarters	1 mounted command observation stand
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 120L14 howitzer and crew (ds)
		1 limber

DUTCH TOE 5 FORTRESS GROUP, 1940

There were four separate fortress groups in Dutch service in 1940, each slightly different in composition. These were grouped under the Vesting Holland (Fortress Holland) command and defended the Rotterdam area. The units in each brigade are shown in the table immediately below, while the organization of the components in an ideal group are shown in the TO&E chart.

Components

Group	Inf Regt HQ	Inf Bn	Art Regt HQ	Fld Art Bn	Fort Art Bn	HMG	Eng
Kil	28	I-III/28, III/34	23	I/23, II/23, I/17	III/14, I/25	--	14
Spui	34	I/39, I-III/34	14	--	I,II/14, I/26	11	13
West	42, 39	III/42, II/39, 10 Grens	--	--	--	--	--
Oost/ Merwede	31, 23	I-III/23, II/25, I-III/31, II/32,	13	--	I-III/13, I/24, I/27	--	1

13th and 14th Fortress Artillery Regiments equipped with 12-lang-staal guns. 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th Fortress Artillery Regiments equipped with 15-lang-staal guns.

Troop Quality: Trained

Morale: 7

GROUP TROOPS		
Headquarter and Separate Companies	Headquarters	1 command stand 1 car
	Headquarters Company	1 staff telephone stand
	Heavy Machine Gun Company	1 mounted command infantry stand 3 machine gun carts
	Engineer Company	1 command engineer stand 2 engineer stands
	1-2 INFANTRY REGIMENTS, EACH	
Regimental Troops	Headquarters	1 mounted command stand
	Headquarters Company	1 staff telephone wagon
		1 57L20 infantry gun and crew
		1 limber
		1 <i>supply wagon</i>
	Mortar Company	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 8cm mortars stand (ds)
		1 wagon
	Antitank Company	1 mounted command AT rifle stand
		1 47L32 AT gun and crew
1 limber		
1-3 Infantry Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 command stand
	Machine Gun Company	2 MMG stands
	1 Infantry Company	1 command infantry stand
		1 infantry stand
2 Infantry Companies, each	2 infantry stands	

ARTILLERY REGIMENT		
	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
0-3 Light Artillery Battalions, each	Headquarters	1 mounted command observation stand
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 75L30 field gun and crew (ds)
1 limber		
0-5 Fortress Artillery Battalion	Headquarters	1 command observation stand
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 command infantry stand
		1 15-lang-staal or 12-lang-staal gun and crew (ds)

DUTCH TOE 6

CORPS CAVALRY REGIMENT, 1940

There were four separate battalion-strength corps cavalry regiments (1st through 4th Hussars) organized as shown below. In addition, the 5th Hussar Regiment was still organized as a horsed cavalry regiment.

Troop Quality: Regular

Morale: 8

1st – 4th Hussar Regiments		
Regiment Troops	Headquarters	1 command stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Company	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	2 mounted squadrons, each	1 command cavalry stand
		1 cavalry stand
	4 Bicycle Squadrons, each	1 bicycle command infantry stand
		2 bicycle infantry stands
	Machine Gun Squadron (and mortar platoon)	1 command weapons stand
		1 MMG stand
		2 light trucks
	Anti-Tank Company	1 command infantry stand
		2 47L32 AT guns and crews
3 light trucks		

5th Hussar Regiment		
Regiment Troops	Headquarters	1 mounted command stand
	Headquarters Company	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	4 mounted squadrons, each	1 command cavalry stand
		2 cavalry stands
	Machine Gun Squadron	1 command MMG stand
		3 MMG stands
		4 MG carts
	Horse Artillery Battery	1 mounted command infantry stand
		2 57L20 infantry guns and crews
		1 47L32 AT gun and crew
3 limbers		

DUTCH TOE 7

SEPARATE ARTILLERY, 1940

The main command artillery of the Dutch Army were the four battalions of “10 veld” guns and three battalions of “15-lang-15” howitzers. While more modern weapons were on order, deliveries from both Sweden and Germany had stopped due to the outbreak of hostilities. To fill the gap the Dutch brought a large number of ancient steel Krupp guns from the 1880s back into service and mobilized reservists and cadets to man them. These antiques were mostly not provided with organic transport and so were emplaced in their firing pits before war broke out. In theory they could be moved by borrowing transport from other units, but few if any were ever moved from their original firing positions. Two of these battalions were assigned to regular infantry units (one to the 18th Division and one to Infantry Brigade A) and so were probably provided with unit transport. These two battalions are shown in *italic*.

Corps and Army Artillery Battalions

Regt	Bn	Bttys	Wpn	Mob	Cmnd
9	I	3	10 veld	mot	IV
10	I	3	10 veld	mot	I
11	I	3	10 veld	mot	III
12	I	4	10 veld	mot	II
13	I-III	3 ea	12-lang-staal	stat	Group Merwede
14	I-II	3 ea	12-lang-staal	stat	Group Spui
14	III	3	12-lang-staal	stat	Group Kil
15	I	2	15-lang-15	mot	II
15	II	3	15-lang-15	mot	II
15	III	2	15-lang-15	mot	IV
18	I-II	3	12-lang-staal	stat	IV
<i>18</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>12-lang-staal</i>	<i>mobile</i>	<i>18 Div</i>
19	I	3	12-lang-staal	stat	II
19	II	3	12-lang-staal	stat	II
<i>19</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>12-lang-staal</i>	<i>mobile</i>	<i>Bde A</i>
24	I	3	15-lang-staal	stat	Group Merwede
25	I	3	15-lang-staal	stat	Group Kil
26	I	3	15-lang-staal	stat	Group Spui
27	I	2	15-lang-staal	stat	Group Merwede

Troop Quality: Regular, Trained for static battalions

Morale: 7

ARTILLERY REGIMENT		
Motorized Artillery Battalion	Headquarters	1 command observation stand
		1 car
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 medium supply truck</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 command infantry stand
		1 light truck
1 105L42 field gun or 152L15 howitzer and crew (ds)		
	1 medium truck	
Mobile Artillery Battalion	Headquarters	1 mounted command observation stand
	Headquarters Battery	<i>1 supply wagon</i>
	3 Firing Batteries, each	1 mounted command infantry stand
		1 gun or howitzer and crew (ds)
	1 limber	
Static Artillery Battalion	Headquarters	1 command observation stand
	2-3 Firing Batteries, each	1 command infantry stand
		1 15-lang-staal or 12-lang-staal gun and crew (ds)