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# In Need of a Home Away from Home: The Royal Netherlands Navy in Australia, 1942–1947



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## Abstract

The Royal Netherlands Navy (Koninklijke Marine, KM), after being driven from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) by the Japanese, stationed forces in Australia from 1942 to 1947. The article addresses prewar naval contacts between the KM and Australia, activities of KM ships and aircraft stationed in Australia during the war, and the KM's postwar efforts to increase its forces and return to the NEI. The article argues that the KM presence in Australia was more important than is conveyed by the extant literature, because of Australia's role as a wartime refuge, administration and training center, and supply source for the NEI.

Forward deployment of naval forces has been a long-standing practice for the United States Navy (USN), which bases ships and aircraft in a variety of countries including Spain, Italy, and Japan. In 2012 the United States government announced that U.S. Marine Corps units would be rotated through an Australian base in Darwin, Northern Territory.<sup>1</sup> Australia has a long history of hosting allied forces given its role as a major focal point for U.S. military and naval units operating in the Southwest Pacific during World War II. While U.S. forces comprised the vast majority of foreign military and naval forces based in Australia during World War II, there were also hundreds of Dutch naval and military personnel in Australia during and immediately after World War II.

1. Joshua Stewart, "U.S. and Australia to sign 25-year deal for Marines in Darwin," accessed 30 March 2020, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2014/08/12/u-s-and-australia-to-sign-25-year-deal-for-marines-in-darwin/>

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The presence of Dutch forces in Australia is generally not addressed in the literature, at least not in any detail. Several books examine the hundreds of years of interaction between the Netherlands and Australia. One such book, *The Dutch Down Under, 1606–2006*, emphasizes Dutch migration to Australia in the twentieth century. It contains one chapter that gives a brief overview of the Dutch military forces that operated from Australia during the war.<sup>2</sup> Another compilation by the same editor ten years later has an entire section about the war years, but these eight chapters do not all focus on the Dutch armed forces.<sup>3</sup> A third book released on the 400th anniversary of Dutch contact with Australia has a chapter about the marine archaeology of a Dutch submarine wreck from the war years.<sup>4</sup> A fourth study of the Dutch-Australian connection on the 200th anniversary of the first European settlement of Australia contains a chapter about the wartime alliance between the Netherlands and Australia. This chapter gives a few details about the Dutch naval presence in Australia but emphasizes the larger strategic, diplomatic, and colonial issues that shaped the Dutch-Australian relationship.<sup>5</sup>

The Dutch naval presence in Australia is generally not emphasized in the major studies of the Royal Netherlands Navy (Koninklijke Marine, KM) during World War II. The first attempt to write an overview of the KM's war experiences, a two-volume study by K. W. L. Bezemer first published in the mid-1950s, includes chapters in the second volume about the submarines based in Australia. It does not address Australia as a naval command, however.<sup>6</sup> The KM produced a study of its own forces during World War II. This series, written between 1953 and 1965, features volumes and chapters that focus on particular parts of the world or certain types of naval units. Australia is omitted from the geographical scope of the series.<sup>7</sup> With the limitations

2. Doug Hurst, "The Pacific War, 1941–1945," in *The Dutch Down Under, 1606–2006*, ed. Nonja Peters (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2006), 92–111.

3. Nonja Peters, ed., *A Touch of Dutch on the Western Third: Dutch Maritime, Military, Migration, Mercantile Connections with Western Australia 1616–2016* (Subiaco, Western Australia: Carina Hoang Communications, 2016).

4. Tim Smith, "Onderzeer Boats—K-IX and other World War II Dutch Submarine Mysteries," in *Dutch Connections: 400 Years of Australian–Dutch Maritime Links, 1606–2006*, ed. Lindsey Shaw and Wendy Wilkins (Sydney: Australian National Maritime Museum, 2006), 124–35.

5. J. J. Wijn, "Bondgenoten tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog," in *Nederland en Australië 200 jaar vriendschappelijke betrekkingen*, ed. A. M. de Cock Buning, L. Verheijen, and D. Tom (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinkel, 1988), 60–72.

6. K. W. L. Bezemer, *Zij vochten op de zeven zeeën: verrichtingen en avonturen der Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Utrecht, Netherlands: W. de Haan, 1954); K. W. L. Bezemer, *Verdreven doch niet verslagen: verdere verrichtingen der Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Hilversum, Netherlands: W. de Haan, 1967).

7. *De Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 4 vols. (The Hague: Koninklijke Marine, 1953–65), 092 Marinemonografie, Netherlands National Archives, The Hague (NL-HA-NA), [www.archieven.nl](http://www.archieven.nl).

of the Bezemer series and the KM's own study, a new comprehensive account of the KM during World War II was published by P. M. Bosscher between 1984 and 1990. The third volume has a few mentions of Australia, mostly in the context of submarine operations, but no overview of the command.<sup>8</sup>

What is apparent from the few books that look at several centuries of Dutch-Australian relations, the three major studies of the KM during World War II, and the general absence of books and articles focused on the KM in Australia, is that a gap exists in the literature. This article is an attempt to fill this gap, to complement a study of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (Koninklijke Nederlands Indische Leger, KNIL) in Australia 1942–45.<sup>9</sup>

While the KM forces stationed in Australia 1942–47 were not large in terms of numbers of ships, aircraft, or personnel, they were important to the KM at the global scale. Australia served three functions for the KM: early wartime refuge, midwar administration and training center, and postwar supply source for the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). A more comprehensive understanding of the role played by the KM in World War II requires a more detailed description and analysis of its presence in Australia.<sup>10</sup>

This article describes the Dutch naval presence in Australia from early 1942 to mid-1947. It begins with details of prewar contacts between the KM and Australia. Next it addresses the first few months of the war in the Pacific including the withdrawal of the KM from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) to Australia in March 1942. The following section explains the Dutch decision to station forces in Australia and the command structure established to oversee these forces. The highlights of the operations of Dutch naval units between mid-1942 and August 1945 are provided. The article concludes with an account of the immediate postwar period including the arrival of Dutch former prisoners of war (POWs) in Australia, ship transfers from the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) to the KM, tensions over the Netherlands' attempt to regain control over Indonesia, and the gradual drawdown of Dutch naval forces in Australia.

### The Prewar Period

The close naval relationship between the Netherlands and Australia during World War II was not unprecedented, as naval contacts between the two countries

8. P. M. Bosscher, *De Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 3 vols. (Franeker, Netherlands: T. Wever, 1984–90). Each volume has an English summary at the end.

9. H. L. Zwitter, "Het Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger in Australië, 1942–1945," *Mededelingen van de Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis Landmachtstaf 8* (1985): 67–90.

10. For a thorough treatment of Dutch internal government and military service debates, plus the broader political and military relationship with Australia, see Jack M. Ford, *Allies in a Bind: Australia and the Netherlands East Indies in the Second World War* (Loganholme, Queensland: Netherlands Ex-Servicemen and Women's Association, Queensland Branch, 1999). This 265-page book is a modified reprint of Ford's Ph.D. dissertation in the Department of History, University of Queensland, Australia.



existed prior to the war. The Dutch sent ships from their NEI squadron to Australia on several occasions during the previous four decades as part of a “show the flag” voyage or when warships represented the Netherlands at international events.<sup>11</sup> The cruiser *Noordbrabant* arrived at Melbourne via Albany in May 1901 for an international naval review to celebrate the creation of the Australian federation.<sup>12</sup> The armored ships *De Ruyter*, *Hertog Hendrik*, and *Koningen Regentes* visited Australia’s major cities in 1910. Twenty years later, Rear Admiral C. C. Kaijser on the light cruiser *Java* with the destroyers *De Ruyter* and *Evertsen* made a similar cruise between September and November 1930.<sup>13</sup> As part of its transfer from the Netherlands to the NEI, the submarine *K-XVIII* visited Fremantle in June 1935.<sup>14</sup> For the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Sydney, the sloop *Flores* visited several of the major cities on the east and south coasts of Australia from January through March 1938.<sup>15</sup>

While Dutch warships made occasional visits to Australia, a more substantial relationship between the navies of the Netherlands and Australia was prevented by the long-standing Dutch foreign policy of neutrality. For example, a 1934 goodwill mission from Australia to the NEI led by J. G. Latham recommended a closer naval connection between the navies but without result. In 1939 the Dutch turned down a request that the commander in chief of the RAN visit the NEI. With the onset of war in Europe that year, the Netherlands began to worry about the potential occupation of the home country by Germany. Once that actually happened, in May 1940, Japan’s aggressive actions in East and Southeast Asia prompted the Netherlands government-in-exile to engage in discreet defense cooperation with the Allies in Asia while still officially maintaining its neutral foreign policy for the NEI.<sup>16</sup>

11. Details of these port calls can be found in contemporary newspaper articles such as “Dutch Admiral, Visit to Canberra, Federal Government’s Welcome, Hopes for Increased Trade,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 October 1930, 10. The National Library of Australia has a digital newspaper database available through its website [www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au).

12. “Hr. Ms. Noordbrabant te Melbourne,” *Marineblad* 16 (1901/2): 171–77.

13. Department van Defensie, *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Marine*, 1929–30 vol. (The Hague: De Gebroeders van Cleef, n.d.), 83–102. This annual publication, suspended during World War II, gives a comprehensive overview of the personnel, ships, and shore facilities of the KM. This includes summaries of the voyages of ships outside Dutch and NEI waters plus tables of personnel numbers.

14. Department van Defensie, *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Marine*, 1934–35 vol. (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1936), 202–68.

15. Department van Defensie, *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Marine*, 1937–38 vol. (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1939), 188–203.

16. Herman Theodore Bussemaker, “Australian-Dutch Defence Cooperation, 1940–1941,” *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 29 (November 1996). Available online at <https://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j29/herman.asp>. By the same author, “Paradise in Peril: The Netherlands, Great Britain and the Defense of the Netherlands East Indies, 1940–41,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 31, no. 1 (2000): 115–36.

The Dutch naval commander in chief in the NEI sought Australian assistance in late 1940 with fueling KM warships patrolling to the eastward of the Indonesian archipelago to protect merchant ships arriving from the Pacific Ocean. German raiders were thought to be active in the southwest Pacific and thus a threat to Dutch ships bringing weapons from the United States. Specifically, the KM desired Australian permission to station a tanker at Rabaul (New Britain) or Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea). These tankers were to refuel the *Java* and flotilla leader *Tromp* when they escorted small groups of Dutch ships from Fiji to Brisbane, Cairns, or Port Moresby, or from those ports westward into the NEI.<sup>17</sup> The Australian War Cabinet and the RAN both approved of this plan in January 1941, and the Dutch were given blanket permission for their ships to visit Australian waters for this purpose.<sup>18</sup>

In February 1941, in recognition that war with Japan was likely, the KM stationed Commander Gerlof Salm as liaison officer at Melbourne since there was not a naval attaché in Canberra. The RAN then sent Acting Commander Vincent Kennedy to Dutch naval headquarters at Batavia (today Jakarta) with a similar role.<sup>19</sup> Kennedy submitted a series of reports beginning in May 1941 to the RAN's director of naval intelligence with observations about mostly mundane administrative and personnel matters until the war broke out in December. The reports then focused on sometimes conflicting sources of information arriving at Batavia and the organizational challenges faced by the combined Royal Navy (RN) and RAN operations office.<sup>20</sup>

The Australian government in late March 1941 proposed that the NEI send military aircraft to visit Australia. The Dutch were invited to fly to the southern states or limit the trip to just Darwin, and were offered the opportunity to characterize the flight as a training mission. The Australian government made this proposal in the hope that the Dutch would offer a return visit by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), which was eager to evaluate airfields at Koepang, Dutch Timor (today Kupang), and Ambon in case future hostilities with Japan necessitated the RAAF deploying outside Australia.<sup>21</sup>

The KM's naval air service (Marineluchtvaartdienst, MLD) sent three Do-24K flying boats from the main naval base at Soerabaja (today Surabaya) on the

17. Jaap Anten, et al., *Hr. Ms. kruisers "Java" en "Sumatra"* (Zierikzee, Netherlands: Asia Maior, 2001), 106–8.

18. Fueling of Dutch warships in Australian waters, barcode 398506, series B6121, National Archives of Australia (NAA). NAA files cited in this article are available digitally on the NAA website and can be found most easily by searching with the barcode.

19. G. Hermon Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939–1942* (Sydney: William Collins, 1985), 432.

20. NLO, Batavia—correspondence with DNI, AWM 124, Australian War Memorial (AWM). The holdings of the AWM are included in the online catalog of the NAA.

21. War Cabinet Minute No 912—Invitation to Netherlands East Indies to send an air force flight to Darwin, 1566064, A2676, NAA; War Cabinet Minute No 1052—Visit of Netherlands East Indies aircraft to Australia, 1564614, A2676, NAA.

island of Java to Broome, and then to Darwin. These aircraft, plus three Glenn Martin bombers from the Militaire Luchtvaart Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands Indies Army Air Force, ML-KNIL), visited Darwin from 16 to 19 May 1941. A report on this visit by an RAAF intelligence officer indicated that the military and naval personnel from both countries learned the technical specifications and performance limits of each other's aircraft. The RAAF seemed impressed with the professional experience, training levels, and flying ability of their KM counterparts.<sup>22</sup>

The KM was involved again with Australia during the search for the missing HMAS *Sydney*. The light cruiser, returning to Fremantle after escorting a troopship toward the NEI, was sunk after encountering the German raider *Kormoran* on 19 November 1941. Because the German ship sank the *Sydney* before it could get off a radio message about the encounter, the RAN was unaware of the ship's loss for several days until survivors of the *Kormoran* were picked up by passing merchant ships. The RAN then launched a search for the *Sydney* and asked the KM squadron in the NEI for assistance. The flotilla leader *Tromp* sailed from Java on 25 November to search from the Sunda Strait toward Fremantle along *Sydney's* likely route. It found nothing prior to reaching 20 degrees south latitude, the limit requested by the RAN. Three KM flying boats also searched areas closer to the NEI but without result.<sup>23</sup>

### The First Few Months of the War in the Pacific

Japan's attempt to conquer the Indo-Pacific region in early December 1941 intensified the Dutch connection to Australia. The NEI government wished to purchase munitions from Australia, particularly small arms ammunition.<sup>24</sup> Another weapon sought from Australian sources was naval mines. The Australian War Cabinet decided to release 300 from RAN stocks for transfer to the NEI in late December 1941.<sup>25</sup>

About a month after the Japanese attack on the United States and Britain, the Allies reorganized command structures in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The multinational nature of the Allied defense was recognized by forming the American, British, Dutch, Australian (ABDA) Command on 15 January 1942. This command, which encompassed much of Southeast Asia and northern Australia, soon resulted in a deepening of the KM-RAN relationship. The RAN contributed a few cruisers, a pair of destroyers, several sloops, and the seven ships of the 21st Minesweeping Flotilla to the defense of the NEI. The commodore

22. Report on the visit of the Dutch Naval and Military Air Force Detachments to Darwin, from 16 May to 19 May 1941, AWM 368/8.

23. Wesley Olson, *Bitter Victory: The Death of HMAS Sydney* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000).

24. Bussemaker, "Australian-Dutch Defence Cooperation, 1940-1941."

25. War Cabinet Minute 1641—Supply of naval mines to Netherlands East Indies of 30 December 1941, 1566153, A2676, NAA.



commanding China Force, providing local cruiser escort of important convoys to/from Singapore, was Captain J. A. Collins, RAN.<sup>26</sup>

As the Japanese gradually established air supremacy over the NEI, it became too dangerous to conduct flight training within the archipelago. The MLD obtained Australian permission to move its flight training to Australian bases. Several hundred naval aviation personnel for the training group departed Soerabaja aboard the Dutch merchant ship *Tjinegara* on 17 February.<sup>27</sup> On 19 February five flying boats (four Do-24K and one PBY-5) departed Java for Australia. After stopping at Broome, Karumba, Townsville, Gladstone, and Brisbane, on 24 February they arrived at Rathmines on Lake Macquarie southwest of Newcastle in New South Wales, where the RAAF had a flying boat base.

Upon *Tjinegara's* arrival at Adelaide on 4 March, the personnel were sent to the RAAF's No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School at Parafield and No. 6 Service Flight Training School at Mallala, both in South Australia.<sup>28</sup> The remainder were sent to Rathmines, arriving on 11 March. The flying boats at Rathmines were joined by several dozen Ryan STM-S2 single-engine floatplanes, which had been ordered in 1940 by the Dutch government, but few of which had been delivered by the time of the evacuation order. Some of the Ryan aircraft were brought to Australia on the *Tjinegara*.<sup>29</sup>

As the Japanese armed forces swept through Southeast Asia, it became obvious by February 1942 that the NEI would fall. The ABDA Command was dissolved on 25 February. Land, air, and naval forces comprising the defunct ABDA Command would need to fall back to Ceylon (today Sri Lanka) or Australia, if they could be withdrawn at all. After the Battle of the Java Sea on the night of 27 February, Allied naval power in the NEI was effectively crushed. Most of the remaining vessels of the KM were smaller warships such as minelayers, minesweepers, and motor torpedo boats. In addition, there were the usual auxiliaries such as tankers, tenders, and the numerous patrol vessels of the militarized Gouvernementsmarine, a force somewhat similar to a coast guard. Most of these ships were concentrated at the major naval base at Soerabaja. Many of these ships were of insufficient range, too slow, too lightly armed, or in need of repairs to escape and thus were scuttled and the crews used ashore or evacuated by ship from Tjilatjap (today Cilacap) on the south coast of Java. Those auxiliary vessels operated by the Gouvernementsmarine were largely manned by indigenous personnel who had no desire to leave the archipelago. These ships were also scuttled instead of being evacuated.

26. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939–1942*, chaps. 15–16.

27. Immigration Act—MS “*Tjinegara*”—evacuees and members of Netherlands East Indies Air and Naval Air Force ex Sourabaya [sic], 494440, D1976, NAA.

28. RAAF Unit History Sheets Elementary Flying Training School 1 to 7, 7 Jan 39–Aug 45, 1359940, A9186, NAA; RAAF Unit History Sheets Service Flying Training School 5 to 8, 8 Oct 41–Jul 45, 1360155, A9186, NAA.

29. Geoff Goodall, “Ryan ST-M in Australia,” accessed 30 March 2020, [www.goodall.com.au/australian-aviation/ryan-stm/ryan-stm.htm](http://www.goodall.com.au/australian-aviation/ryan-stm/ryan-stm.htm).

Toward the end of the NEI campaign, the RN asked the KM to evacuate its forces to Ceylon to join the RN's Eastern Fleet. The KM then directed its ships to evacuate to Colombo, Ceylon, though granting ships the option to sail elsewhere depending on their local circumstances and range.<sup>30</sup> In early March 1942, the commander of KM forces at Soerabaja, Acting Rear Admiral Pieter Koenraad, ordered ships with sufficient range to sail for Australia instead of Ceylon.<sup>31</sup> While the KM fought until the last moment, a considerable number of its ships and personnel were able to evacuate the Indonesian archipelago and reach either Ceylon or Australia.<sup>32</sup> Though some of these escaped units were eventually sent to other theaters, the KM maintained a presence in Australia for the duration of the war and its immediate aftermath.<sup>33</sup>

The exceptions to the rule about small craft being scuttled were three sixty-ton auxiliary minesweepers (*Merbaboe*, *Rindjani*, *Smeroe*), which arrived at Broome on 6 March. A second instance of a ship that was not expected to avoid scuttling was the minesweeper *Abraham Crijnsen*, which made a daring escape. The ship left the main naval base of Soerabaja on 6 March camouflaged as an island. Sailing by night and anchoring by day covered in freshly cut foliage, the ship was indistinguishable from the many small islands that comprise the Indonesian archipelago. After a lengthy journey across waters dominated by enemy air and surface units, the *Abraham Crijnsen* arrived at Geraldton, Western Australia, on 15 March.<sup>34</sup> The minesweeper was initially used to escort Dutch submarines in Australian waters. Personnel shortages in the KM forced the ship to be decommissioned and loaned to the RAN, which operated the ship from late August 1942 to May 1943 (Figure 1).<sup>35</sup> At that time *Abraham Crijnsen* rejoined the KM and was based at Melbourne, then Brisbane, for minesweeping, convoy escort, and personnel training duties until the end of the war.<sup>36</sup>

30. *Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945. Verslag houdende de uitkomsten van het onderzoek. Deel 8C-II: Militair beleid 1940–1945 (punt P van het enquêtebesluit). Verhoren* (The Hague: Staatsdrukkerij- en Uitgeverijbedrijf, 1956), 1095 (Conrad Emil Lambert Helfrich).

31. Pieter Koenraad declaration of 27 March 1947, inventarisnummer 90, collectienummer 1, Collectie Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, The Hague.

32. Gerhard W. Stöve, "Queen's Navy at War: Operations of the Royal Netherlands Navy in the Southwest Pacific during the Invasion of the Philippines, Malacca, and East Indies," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 76, no. 3 (1950): 288–301.

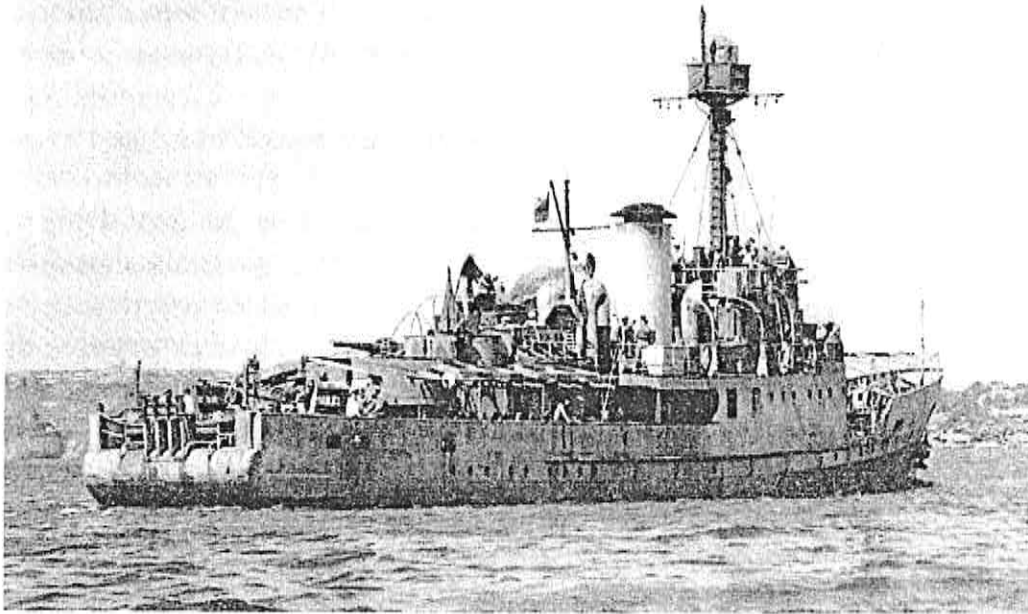
33. Bosscher, *De Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 3:chaps. 1–4, focuses on the Dutch forces in the Indian and Pacific Oceans after the fall of the NEI.

34. A more detailed account of the incredible voyage of *Abraham Crijnsen* appears in Mark C. Jones, "Escape from Soerabaja," *The Navy* (Sydney), September–December 2001, 21–23.

35. For a brief account of this ship's service in the RAN with a mixed Australian, British, and Dutch crew, see Marsden C. Hordern, *A Merciful Journey: Recollections of a World War II Patrol Boat Man* (Carlton, Victoria: Miegunyah Press, 2005), chap. 4.

36. Details of the movements of KM ships in Australian waters can be found in two primary sources compiled by the RAN, including the "World War II Daily Escort Situation" and





*Figure 1:* The minesweeper *Abraham Crijnsen* during its loan period to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), date and location unknown but possibly early 1943 at Sydney. The Jan van Amstel-class minesweepers, to which *Crijnsen* belonged, were designed to lay mines as well as sweep them. This dual role is evident in the form of the ship's stern. [Courtesy of the RAN Sea Power Centre—Australia]

The first ship of the KM to reach Australia was actually the flotilla leader *Tromp*, which arrived at Fremantle on 27 February 1942 en route for Sydney.<sup>37</sup> The *Tromp* had been damaged by the Japanese destroyers *Asashio* and *Oshio* in the Battle of Badoeng Strait on 19 February 1942.<sup>38</sup> The damage from ten shell hits was such that extensive repairs were required. Since Soerabaja was already under daily air attack, after quick repairs the *Tromp* was sent to Cockatoo Island, Sydney, for complete repair.

Other than the *Tromp*, *Abraham Crijnsen*, and three Merbaboe-class coastal minesweepers, the only Dutch warships to escape directly to Australia were

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“World War II Daily Movement Summaries.” These documents in PDF form are found on the RAN website at [www.navy.gov.au/history](http://www.navy.gov.au/history). For the larger history of this ship, see R. E. van Holst Pellekaan, *Hr. Ms. Abraham Crijnsen: van mijnnevener tot museumschip*, ed. Harry de Bles and Anita M. C. van Dissel (Zaltbommel, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Aprilis, 2006).

37. The *Tromp* was originally intended to serve as a flotilla leader for destroyers in the Netherlands East Indies. She combined a main armament of six 5.9-inch guns and six 21-inch torpedoes with a top speed of 32.5 knots on a displacement of 3,450 tons (standard). Compared to modern light cruisers in other navies, the *Tromp* was a much smaller and more lightly armed ship. Nevertheless, it is generally described as a light cruiser by most reference books on warships.

38. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942–1945*, 583–84.

submarines. The submarines *K-VIII*, *K-LX*, and *K-XII* left Soerabaja carrying headquarters personnel and arrived at Geraldton in early March, continuing on to Fremantle. These three boats were old and in a poor state of repair, so they were stationed at Fremantle (*K-VIII*, *K-XII*) and Sydney (*K-LX*) for use as targets for antisubmarine training and other second line duties. After a few months *K-VIII* and *K-LX* were simply worn out and so were decommissioned and eventually scrapped in Australia.<sup>39</sup>

The final unit of the KM that escaped to Australia was a group of flying boats of the MLD. Dornier Do-24K and Consolidated PBV-5 Catalina aircraft from three squadrons arrived in Broome in early March, with 132 aircrew, twenty-seven naval personnel as passengers, and eighty-nine civilians. Nine of these aircraft (five Do-24K and four PBV-5) were lost shortly after arrival when Japanese fighter aircraft strafed the port on 3 March 1942.<sup>40</sup> Casualties, both KM and civilian, were substantial.

Lastly, hundreds of KM personnel from assorted sunken/scuttled ships and shore bases were evacuated by merchant ships from Tjilatjap on the south coast of Java to either Ceylon or Fremantle. While Japanese warships and aircraft intercepted a dozen or more of these ships at sea, others made it to an Allied port.<sup>41</sup> The merchant ship *Sloterdijk* arrived at Fremantle on 8 March with about 350 Dutch naval personnel including 50 men from the destroyer *Banckert*, another 50 from the destroyer *Witte de With*, and some naval cadets. The naval auxiliary *Janssens* arrived at Fremantle on 14 March with most of the crew of the submarine *K-X* and personnel from the motor torpedo boat branch. Shortly after arriving in Australia, KM personnel from the evacuation ships were assembled at the RAN's Flinders Naval Depot south of Melbourne for processing and reassignment.<sup>42</sup>

Combining military personnel and civilians, of Dutch, Eurasian, and Indonesian ethnicity, an estimated 10,000 people evacuated from the NEI to

39. Vic Jeffery, "The Submarines that Stayed," *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute* 11, no. 1 (1985): 21–25.

40. Tom Lewis and Peter Ingman, *Zero Hour at Broome: The Untold Story of the Attacks on Northwest Australia in 1942* (Kent, South Australia: Avonmore Books, 2010). See also Silvano V. Jung, "Australia's Undersea Aerial Armada: The Aviation Archaeology of World War II Flying Boats Lying in Roebuck Bay, Broome, Western Australia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Faculty of Law, Business and Arts, Charles Darwin University, 2008). This dissertation is available from the university website as a free PDF download in two volumes.

41. For a detailed list of the ships that sailed from the NEI in the final days before the Japanese occupation, and their fates, see Tom Womack, *The Allied Defense of the Malay Barrier, 1941–1942* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), chap. 32. Womack draws heavily on a Dutch postwar study, Commissie van Onderzoek Gedragingen Marinepersoneel in Azië en Australië, "Overzicht betreffende het uitweken van schepen en vliegtuigen en het evacueeren van Marinepersoneel uit Nederlandsch-Indië in februari/maart 1942." A copy of this unpublished document is held by the Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam.

42. Anita M. C. van Dissel, "Offensief vanuit de verdediging: zeevarenden in Australië 1942–1943," *Maritiem Journaal*, 1996, 170–77.

Australia from 1942 to 1945.<sup>43</sup> Vice Admiral Conrad Helfrich, commanding all KM forces in the NEI until the evacuation, signaled to Acting Rear Admiral Frederik Coster to expect 1,500 men arriving in Australia from the NEI.<sup>44</sup> Coster, in postwar testimony before a Dutch parliamentary commission that interviewed senior government and military officials about their wartime actions, found it difficult to estimate how many KM personnel arrived in Australia upon the fall of the NEI. He guessed the number was between 2,000 and 5,000 men.<sup>45</sup> A lieutenant commander who was among the evacuees, when asked how many naval personnel reached Australia, did not provide an estimate. He said it fluctuated as some men were immediately sent to Colombo, Ceylon, while others continued to arrive at the Flinders Naval Depot. He did say that almost all of the KM personnel were Europeans with few Indonesian sailors.<sup>46</sup> While the upper limit of Coster's estimate seems much too high, Dutch naval personnel were a significant component of this migration.

### Settling in to Australia

Once the various units that could escape the Indonesian archipelago had arrived in Ceylon or Australia, the Dutch were faced with the question of where to assign their forces. On 15 April 1942 Acting Rear Admiral Frederik Coster offered operational control of the Dutch warships in Australian waters to the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board, which accepted.<sup>47</sup> Given the need to prepare for immediate attacks by the Japanese, the escaped units were promptly assigned to local duties at Fremantle or in southeastern Australia. By mid-1942, when it became clear that the Japanese were not going to launch a sustained campaign against either Ceylon or Australia, the Dutch units could have been redeployed. Given the small size of the Dutch military after the disasters in the Netherlands and the NEI (as of 10 June 1942, the Dutch had only 1,353 men of all services stationed in Australia), it would have been logical to assign the majority of the remaining units to a particular theater to simplify command, supply, and liaison arrangements.<sup>48</sup> However, the Dutch government wished to demonstrate its contribution to the Allied war effort in multiple theaters and was particularly interested in having its forces operate in close proximity to the NEI. The Dutch were concerned that the conquest of the NEI would lead to possible postwar independence for the islands, so operating

43. Peters, ed., *The Dutch Down Under*, ix.

44. A. N. de Vos van Steenwijk, *Het marinebeleid in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1986), 208.

45. *Parlementaire enquêtecommissie regeringsbeleid 1940–1945*, 8C-I, 643 (Frederik Willem Coster).

46. *Parlementaire enquêtecommissie regeringsbeleid 1940–1945*, 8C-II, 1178 (Armand van Karnebeek).

47. Abraham Crijnssen—reversion to Royal Netherlands Navy, 483857, MP1049/5, NAA.

48. War Records Netherlands—Netherlands Forces in Australia, 179117, A981, NAA.



their forces in and near the islands would allow the Dutch to maintain a degree of political legitimacy in any postwar discussions about the fate of the NEI.

In addition to the desire to keep Dutch forces operating near the NEI, the Dutch government was internally divided as to whether to cooperate most closely with Britain or the United States. While the Dutch government-in-exile had been located in London since the fall of the home country in May 1940 and many ships of the KM were serving alongside the RN in Europe, the United States was clearly the dominant power in the Pacific theater.<sup>49</sup> For the Dutch to regain control of the NEI, the assistance of Britain and/or the United States would be required to drive out the Japanese. The more ships, aircraft squadrons, and battalions of troops that the Dutch could deploy in one theater, the greater the influence they could expect to wield upon strategy in that theater.

Due to the desire to show the Dutch flag in many theaters, and the split within the Dutch government and military about whether to ally more closely with the British in Ceylon or the Americans in Australia, the Dutch divided their forces between the two theaters.<sup>50</sup> Vice Admiral Conrad Helfrich had command of all Dutch military forces operating in Asia and Australia from his headquarters in Colombo while his deputy, Acting Rear Admiral Coster, had local command of all Dutch military forces in Australia from his headquarters in Melbourne. Realizing that it made more sense to concentrate Dutch naval forces in the Indian Ocean in one location, Vice Admiral Helfrich sought in February 1943 to move his headquarters to Australia. U.S. General Douglas MacArthur was in favor of this transfer for it would have brought more Dutch forces into his command, the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA). The Dutch government in London, including the commander in chief of the KM, Admiral Johannes Furstner, wanted to cooperate more closely with the British and so obliged Helfrich to remain in Ceylon.<sup>51</sup> Small numbers of KM submarines, surface ships, and aircraft operated from Ceylon from 1942 to 1945.

Acting Rear Admiral Coster assumed the post of Marinecommandant Australië (Senior Officer, Royal Netherlands Navy in Australia, MCA) at Melbourne on 1 March 1942 (Figure 2). Coster had previously been head of the NEI mission sent to Australia in January 1942 to purchase weapons.<sup>52</sup> In addition to being the senior Dutch naval officer in Australia, Coster was also

49. Mark C. Jones, "Friend and Advisor to the Allied Navies: The Royal Navy's Principal Liaison Officer and Multinational Naval Operations in World War II," *Journal of Military History* 77, no. 3 (2013): 991–1023.

50. For a discussion of the broader issue of Dutch preference for alliance partners, see Gerke Teitler, "Sea Power on the Decline: Anti-Americanism and the Royal Netherlands Navy, 1942–1952," *European Contributions to American Studies* 11 (1986): 72–84.

51. Ford, *Allies in a Bind*, 97.

52. Most Dutch naval officers in positions of importance were active duty officers from the executive branch, and thus graduates of the Dutch naval academy at Willemsoord near Den Helder. Biographical details such as promotion dates, decorations, and highlights of their service career can be found in P. S. van t'Haaff and M. J. C. Klaassen, *Gedenkboek honderd jarig bestaan der adelborstenopleiding te Willemsoord 1854–1954* (Bussum, Netherlands: C. A. J. van Dishoeck, 1954).

*Figure 2: Rear Admiral Frederik W. Coster (1886–1965)*  
[Courtesy of the Collection of the Netherlands Institute of Military History, image 070739]



the commander of all Dutch military forces in Australia until 1 May 1943. As operational control over KM forces in Australia was handled by the RAN and later the USN, Rear Admiral Coster was limited to administrative matters such as personnel assignments, discipline, pay, medical care, recruitment, and training.

The need to obtain information about what was happening inside the Japanese-occupied NEI led the Dutch government to establish the Navy and Army Intelligence Service at Melbourne.<sup>53</sup> This body was eventually renamed Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS). Commander Salm was later reassigned from liaison duties to be head of NEFIS from March 1942 to February 1944.<sup>54</sup>

The naval aviation training personnel were withdrawn from Parafield and Mallala on 15 April 1942 when Dutch aviation training was transferred to Jackson, Mississippi, United States. This transfer occurred because the RAAF needed the airfields for its own use. These naval aviators as well as larger numbers from the ML-KNIL departed Melbourne on 18 April 1942 on the converted passenger liner *Mariposa* for San Francisco.<sup>55</sup> All but one of the six surviving Do-24Ks were turned over to the RAAF on 29 April 1942, while the PBY-5s were transferred to Ceylon in late May 1942 to join other Dutch PBY-5s and later formed 321 (Netherlands) Squadron of Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF).<sup>56</sup> The Ryan trainers were given to the RAAF in July 1942.

53. Bob de Graaff, "Hot Intelligence in the Tropics: Dutch Intelligence Operations in the Netherlands East Indies," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, no. 4 (1987): 563–84.

54. Gerlof B. Salm, "Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS) in Australië in de periode maart '42 tot februari '44," *Marineblad* 78 (1968): 781–93.

55. O. G. Ward, P. C. Boer, and G. J. Casius, *The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School* (The Hague: Afdeling Maritieme Historie van de Marinestaf, 1982). See also Amanda Lyons and Will Morgan, "Patriots without a Country: Dutch Wings over Jackson," *Journal of Mississippi History* 75 (2013): 221–53.

56. Tom Womack, *The Dutch Naval Air Force against Japan: The Defense of the Netherlands East Indies 1941–1942* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006).

To facilitate oversight and administration, and coordination between the KM and RAN, several actions were taken. Since most Dutch naval personnel in Australia were stationed at Fremantle in Western Australia, Commander Gustaaf Berg served as senior Dutch naval officer in the region beginning in July 1942. The KM took over an entire floor in the Colonial Mutual Life building on St. Georges Terrace in Perth as its local headquarters. In addition, the major Australian ports each had a Dutch naval officer stationed there to oversee Dutch naval and merchant ships that arrived.<sup>57</sup> To ensure the smooth operation of Dutch warships from Australian ports, the larger KM warships carried a British Naval Liaison Officer (BNLO) and a small communications staff of signalmen, radio operators, and coders. Dutch warships arriving from Europe or the Indian Ocean generally carried an RN liaison staff, which was eventually replaced by RAN personnel.<sup>58</sup>

Because Dutch naval, aviation, and military units were few in number and deployed in various locations around the country, the presence of Dutch units in Australia was likely to go relatively unnoticed amid the much larger numbers of Australian, American, and later British forces. Since the Netherlands government was trying to influence Allied strategy in the region, it needed to be recognized as a sovereign state. If Dutch forces were largely indistinguishable from other Allied forces, then the Dutch claim to a separate voice in war strategy would be undercut. Therefore, the commander of all Dutch forces in Australia, Acting Rear Admiral Coster, ordered that Dutch forces wear Dutch uniforms and helmets, use Dutch small arms, give the Dutch salute, and adhere to Dutch disciplinary regulations.<sup>59</sup>

Netherlands military personnel stood out from those of other Allied military services not just because of their uniforms, helmets, side arms, and saluting style, but also because some of their men were Eurasian or Indonesian. The KM had recruited Indonesians from across the archipelago since the early 1900s due to a shortage of Europeans. Indonesian personnel were prevented from becoming officers until war seemed imminent, and then only a handful were commissioned. When KM units that survived the NEI campaign were ordered to sail to Ceylon or Australia, desertion by Indonesians reduced the numbers of naval personnel evacuating as crew on warships or passengers on merchant ships. Once these ships reached Australian ports, Eurasian and Indonesian personnel immediately faced the country's racially discriminatory policies, an entirely different culture, and much colder temperatures.<sup>60</sup>

57. Ford, *Allies in a Bind*, gives in various chapters details of Dutch naval officers assigned as naval control, liaison, and intelligence officers around Australia. See page 61, for example.

58. Mark C. Jones, "Not just along for the Ride: The Role of Royal Navy Liaison Personnel in Multinational Naval Operations during World War II," *Journal of Military History* 76, no. 1 (2012): 127–58.

59. Ford, *Allies in a Bind*, 64.

60. One of the few published sources that focuses on Indonesian personnel in the KM is Herman Keppy, *De laatste inlandse schepelingen: Molukkers in dienst van de Koninklijke Marine 1915–1965* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Focus, 1994).



Whether European, Eurasian, or Indonesian, all KM personnel in Australia were cut off from their families and friends in either occupied Holland or the NEI. These men would have little information concerning their families' fates at the hands of occupation forces for three to five years, depending on where the individual serviceman was from. While in Australia, KM personnel gradually built new lives as they adapted to a different country. A study of the social history of KM personnel in Australia reveals that KM personnel often lived in Australian neighborhoods and sometimes even with Australian families when their ships were in port.<sup>61</sup>

With foreign (especially American) naval and military personnel coming to Australia in increasing numbers, a legal arrangement was needed to govern the prosecution of any Dutch personnel arrested on Australian territory. The National Security (Allied Forces) Regulations, issued on 17 December 1941, granted the Allied governments whose forces were stationed in Australia the ability to prosecute their own personnel according to their own laws.<sup>62</sup>

## Operations from Australia

### *Surface Ships*

In the middle of 1942 the naval forces available to General MacArthur, commander of the SWPA, were less than what he felt was needed. Since the USN was unwilling to provide him with substantial reinforcements, MacArthur asked the British for additional ships. Several Dutch surface ships were operating with the RN from Ceylon. Since the KM already had a headquarters in Australia, the RN sent the Dutch surface ships to Australia.<sup>63</sup>

After *Tromp* was repaired, it returned to Fremantle in July 1942 and was assigned to the SWPA. The *Tromp* operated mainly as a convoy escort between Western Australia and the Indian Ocean until early January 1944 when it was transferred to Ceylon.<sup>64</sup>

The anti-aircraft cruiser *Jacob van Heemskerck* arrived in Australian waters from Ceylon in late October 1942 (Figure 3). Like its half-sister ship *Tromp*, the *Heemskerck* was based at Fremantle as a convoy escort and also provided local anti-aircraft defense while in port. On 28 November 1942, while escorting convoy

61. See D. H. van Velden, "Fremantle's Forgotten Fleet: A Social History of the Royal Netherlands Navy in Western Australia, 1942–1945" (thesis, Department of History, University of Leiden, 1999). A copy of this study is held by the library of the Western Australia Museum.

62. National Security (Allied Forces) Regulations, 1941 Series, no. 302. The Australian commonwealth government's ComLaw website contains the full text of this law. See [www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C1941L00302](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C1941L00302), accessed 8 August 2019. Details about the revision of this regulation are contained in National Security (Allied Forces) Regulations, Application of Above Regulation to Members of the Netherlands Forces in Australia, 101446, A472/1, NAA; National Security (Allied Forces) Regulations—Royal Netherlands Forces in Australia, 5472886, A6388, NAA.

63. Ford, *Allies in a Bind*, 93.

64. G. H. Kleinhout, et al., *De Tromp en haar Trompers* (Emmen, Netherlands: Lanasta, 2003); Henry T. Lenton, *The Royal Netherlands Navy* (London: MacDonald, 1968); Jan Visser, "Royal Netherlands Navy Warships of World War II," accessed 30 March 2020, <http://www.netherlandsnavy.nl>.



*Figure 3:* The anti-aircraft cruiser *Jacob van Heemskerck* at Fremantle, date unknown. Still incomplete when the Netherlands was occupied by Germany in May 1940, the Tromp-class ship was towed to Britain, where it was completed to a modified design with a main armament of British 4-inch anti-aircraft guns. [Courtesy of the family of Saxon Fogarty and Fremantle Ports]

OW-1 from Fremantle to Diego Garcia with the old light cruiser HMAS *Adelaide*, the *Heemskerck* encountered the German blockade-runner *Ramses* that immediately scuttled itself upon sighting the two cruisers.<sup>65</sup> *Heemskerck* served in Australian waters until December 1943 when it transferred to the Mediterranean theater.

The Dutch destroyer force had been almost completely wiped out by the campaign in the NEI. Of the prewar Van Ghent and Van Galen classes (two similar groups of four ships each known collectively as the Admiral class), one ship was lost during the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940 and the remaining seven were lost to various causes in the NEI. Some of the personnel who manned ships lost in the NEI campaign were rescued and later evacuated on merchant ships to Ceylon or Australia. These men, combined with crews from older vessels decommissioned in Britain, were available to man a new ship once the RN transferred ships to the KM. Dutch crews manned two modern fleet destroyers upon their completion, *Van Galen* (ex-HMS *Noble*) and *Tjerk Hiddes* (ex-HMS *Nonpareil*). The *Van Galen* and *Tjerk Hiddes* both served in Australian waters from late October 1942 until early February 1944 on similar duties as the cruisers.<sup>66</sup>

65. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942–1945*, 198.

66. Christopher Langtree, *The Kelly's: British J, K & N Class Destroyers of World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 150–51, 166–67.

*Tjerk Hiddes* completed a noteworthy and daring series of missions 4–25 December 1942. Australian and Dutch troops were still actively resisting the Japanese on the island of Timor in September 1942. The destroyer HMAS *Voyager* had been sent to Timor to replace the existing independent company with fresh troops. After landing its troops, HMAS *Voyager* ran aground and was destroyed to prevent capture. By December 1942 it became necessary to evacuate the remaining Allied troops, plus Portuguese and Dutch civilians. The vicinity of Timor was completely dominated by Japanese naval and air patrols. In three high-speed trips to Timor, *Tjerk Hiddes* evacuated approximately 950 people without damage from the enemy.<sup>67</sup>

The cruisers *Tromp* and *Heemskerck* plus the destroyers *Tjerk Hiddes* and *Van Galen* often served together as part of Task Force 71 assigned to the SWPA Command. The naval forces in the SWPA became the U.S. 7th Fleet in February 1943. Given that southwestern Australia was not a very active war theater, the number of Allied warships stationed there was relatively small. Of the few significant surface warships stationed at Fremantle, the small Dutch squadron represented a sizeable proportion of the Allied naval power in the region.<sup>68</sup> Dutch vessels were quite important for the defense of southwestern Australia, and southwestern Australia was very important for the KM, as the overwhelming majority of Dutch naval forces in Australia were stationed at Fremantle. As the naval war in the Mediterranean theater wound down in late 1943 and early 1944, large numbers of modern British warships were transferred to the Indian Ocean to create a revitalized Eastern Fleet. Vice Admiral Helfrich was unhappy with the relegation of the small Dutch squadron at Fremantle to ocean escort duty, where the ships lost the skills developed with the RN's Eastern Fleet at Ceylon.<sup>69</sup> Since the Japanese threat to Australia had essentially disappeared and the USN was commissioning ever more ships, by February 1944 the last ship of the small Dutch squadron was transferred from Western Australia to Ceylon, where it joined the RN's Eastern Fleet.

#### Submarines

When the first Dutch submarines arrived at Fremantle in March 1942, they initially made use of USN supply and repair facilities since the Dutch did not possess enough submarine tenders for one to be sent to Fremantle.<sup>70</sup> Because of the age of many of the Dutch boats (twenty plus years) and the inability to obtain spare parts from the occupied Netherlands or NEI, Dutch boats spent a considerable amount

67. C. V. Gordon, "HNMS *Tjerk Hiddes*—Timor ferry," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 86, no. 2 (1960): 31–35. See also Graham Wilson, "Timor Triumph: HNLMS *Tjerk Hiddes* at Timor—1942," *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute* 23, no. 1 (1997): 53–57.

68. Ford, *Allies in a Bind*, 97.

69. Van Dissel, "Offensief vanuit de verdediging; zeevarenden in Australië 1942–1943," 173.

70. For further reading on submarines operating from Australia, see David Creed, *Operations of the Fremantle Submarine Base, 1942–1945* (Garden Island, New South Wales: Naval Historical Society of Australia, 1984); Lynn Cairns, *Fremantle's Secret Fleets: Allied Submarines Based in Western Australia during World War II* (Fremantle: Western Australia Maritime Museum, 1995); Michael Sturma, *Fremantle's Submarines: How Allied Submarines and Western Australians Helped Win the War in the Pacific* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015).



of time under repair. After November 1942, the KM stationed the former Dutch civilian tanker *Ondina* as a tender at Fremantle. The *Ondina* had been badly damaged by two Japanese raiders in the Indian Ocean earlier that month and its owners did not consider the ship worth repair. In 1943 the ship was sent to Exmouth Gulf to refuel Dutch and U.S. submarines on their way to/from patrol.<sup>71</sup> Later in the war the KM established its own shore facility at Crawley Bay near Fremantle, formerly used as a USN flying boat base, to support the several Dutch submarines present.<sup>72</sup>

The submarines that escaped to Australia were already in poor condition, but in the case of *K-LX*, the situation was worsened as a result of damage sustained on the night of 31 May–1 June 1942, when three Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney harbor. One torpedo, aimed at the heavy cruiser USS *Chicago*, missed and detonated under the depot ship HMAS *Kuttabul*.<sup>73</sup> The *K-LX* was moored alongside *Kuttabul* and the shock of the explosion damaged the submarine's batteries and lifted the engines off their beds, while the *Kuttabul* sank with casualties. The submarine was decommissioned 15 July 1942 and turned over to the RAN. The former Dutch boat served as HMAS *K9* from 22 June 1943 to 31 March 1944, but mechanical defects prevented the submarine from ever being used again. After conversion to an oil lighter, the former *K-LX* was under tow by the minesweeper *Abraham Crijnsen* from Sydney to Darwin in early June 1945 when the tow line parted. The hulk washed ashore near Seal Rocks on Sugar Loaf Point in New South Wales. The wreck remains buried in the sand, occasionally exposed when severe storms erode the beach.<sup>74</sup>

While the Dutch surface ships were transferred to Ceylon by 1944, Dutch submarines continued to serve in Australian waters.<sup>75</sup> The three original boats that escaped directly to Australia were reinforced later in the war by boats from Europe or those that escaped from the NEI to Ceylon.<sup>76</sup> Some of the older boats were used to land and retrieve NEFIS agents within the NEI so that the Dutch government could try to determine how the islands were faring under Japanese occupation. Submarines *K-XII* (August 1942–May 1943), *K-XV* (February 1944–August 1945), and *K-XIV* (April 1944–August 1945) performed this mission repeatedly.

71. Ford, *Allies in a Bind*, 95.

72. J. F. Drijfhout van Hooff, "De Onderzeebootbasis te Fremantle," in *Veertig Jaren Onderzeedienst, 1906–1946*, by Comitee 40 jarig bestaan Hr. Ms. Onderzeedienst 1946 (Amsterdam: Scheltens & Giltay, 1947), 179–83.

73. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942–1945*, 64–74.

74. Bram Otto, [www.dutchsubmarines.com](http://www.dutchsubmarines.com), accessed 30 March 2020. The page about the *K-LX* mentions its stranding on the Australian coast. See also Smith, "Onderzeer Boats—K-IX and other World War II Dutch Submarine Mysteries."

75. For details of how Dutch submarine personnel spent their time ashore in Australia, see the transcribed remarks of Jan van Hattem and Johannes Loep held by the oral history collection of the Maritime History Department, Western Australia Maritime Museum (WAMM), Fremantle. These talks were given in March 1995 at the International Submarine Convention held at the WAMM.

76. John D. Alden, "Dutch submarines in World War II—The Far East," *Submarine Review*, April 1993, 75–81.

Typically, the boat would leave Fremantle, refuel at Exmouth Gulf, sometimes briefly put in at Darwin, and then sail to the target island. Officially, these older boats were under the control of the USN's submarine command at Fremantle, but NEFIS was permitted to assign them to intelligence missions as needed.

As the need for Allied submarines in European waters declined, more British submarines were transferred to the RN's Eastern Fleet at Ceylon. These boats eventually grew so numerous that there were not enough targets around Sumatra and the Strait of Malacca for them. The RN proposed to the USN that British submarines be transferred to Australia for patrols into the NEI. When the RN was given approval to bring a flotilla of submarines to Australia, additional Dutch submarines (*O-19* and *Zwaardvisch*) arrived in Australia. The more modern Dutch boats conducted combat patrols as part of the RN's 8th (August 1944–April 1945) and later the 4th (April 1945–August 1945) Submarine Flotillas at Fremantle. The *K-XV* (February 1944–August 1945), *K-XIV* (April 1944–August 1945), *O-19* (September 1944–June 1945), *Zwaardvisch* (September 1944–April 1945), *O-21* (May–August 1945), and *O-24* (May–August 1945) patrolled from Fremantle into the NEI, though targets were scarce.

The relative scarcity of Japanese ships in the NEI during late 1944 and early 1945 was not experienced by the 8th Flotilla submarine *Zwaardvisch* during a patrol in October 1944. The *Zwaardvisch* (Swordfish) was a British T-class submarine, formerly HMS *Talent*, and was commissioned into the KM on 13 November 1943. *Zwaardvisch* left Fremantle on 26 September 1944, refueled at Exmouth Gulf, and then transited the Lombok Strait into the Java Sea. Off Soerabaja on 6 October at 0653 hours, *Zwaardvisch* sank the German submarine *U-168*. *Zwaardvisch* rescued twenty-six crew members and put twenty-one of them on a fishing boat, keeping the commander, three officers, and one wounded enlisted man as prisoners. After sinking several coasters by gunfire, on 17 October east of Bawean Island the *Zwaardvisch* attacked two Japanese minelayers, sinking the *Itsukushima* and damaging the *Wakatake*. *Zwaardvisch* sank a merchant ship with gunfire on 19 October and returned to Fremantle on 26 October. This was the most successful patrol by a Dutch submarine during World War II.

### Aviation

The MLD kept one Do-24K (aircraft number X-24) to cooperate with NEFIS by flying intelligence personnel to unoccupied Netherlands New Guinea (NNG).<sup>77</sup> Beginning in mid-1943, 321 Squadron RAF in Ceylon established a detachment in Australia with one Do24K and two PBY-5s. Missions included transporting intelligence agents and supplies to parts of NNG, picking up those intelligence parties, and transporting senior KM officers within Australia. These flights generally moved up the east coast, often stopping at Brisbane and Cairns before arriving at Merauke,

77. For details of these early NEFIS flights, see N. Geldhof, *Verkennen en bewaken: Dornier Do.24K vliegboten van de Marineluchtvaartdienst* (The Hague: Afdeling Maritieme Historie, 1979), 102–6.

NNG. The detachment grew in size during 1945 and was based at the Qantas Empire Airways facility at Rose Bay near Sydney. Beginning in May 1944 there was also a naval flight within 18 Squadron RAAF, which was largely manned by the ML-KNIL. This squadron flew B-25 Mitchell medium bombers from Batchelor in the Northern Territory against targets in the eastern portion of the NEI.<sup>78</sup>

### *Merchant Marine*

The Dutch merchant marine was one of the biggest in the world at the start of World War II. With the beginning of hostilities in the Pacific, considerable numbers of Dutch ships sailed to and from Australian ports across the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Many of the Dutch merchant ships that reached Australia upon the surrender of the NEI belonged to the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (Royal Packet Navigation Company, KPM).<sup>79</sup> These ships proved essential to the Allied war effort, particularly during the New Guinea campaign, and some of their officers were also reservists in the KM.<sup>80</sup>

To administer these ships in terms of their movements, security procedures, and defensive equipment, the KM placed officers in naval control of shipping (NCOS) billets at various Australian ports. The first of the NCOS officers was assigned to Sydney in August 1941, before the war began, and others were eventually posted to Fremantle, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Townsville.<sup>81</sup> These officers were merchant mariners with reserve commissions in the KM, generally in the ranks of lieutenant commander and commander. In addition to NCOS duties, these officers sometimes also served officially or unofficially as a liaison officer to Allied forces at that port. The NCOS officers remained on duty into the early postwar period.<sup>82</sup>

As the war progressed and the Dutch presence grew, the KM stationed liaison officers at the major ports to provide oversight beyond NCOS duties. In the case of Sydney in March 1945, the liaison officer was placed on the staff of the Flag Officer in Charge (FOIC) but still under the direct authority of the Dutch admiral commanding in Australia. His major responsibilities included providing information to the FOIC Sydney about the KM and the NEI, and monitoring and supporting KM personnel passing through the Sydney area.<sup>83</sup>

78. *De Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 2, Western Europe, chap. 7, 092 Marinemonografie, NL-HaNA, about the naval air service in the Far East.

79. Wim van Alebeek, "KPM (1888–1967)—The Forgotten Dutch Shipping Line," in Shaw and Wilkens, eds., *Dutch Connections*, 152–59.

80. Jack M. Ford, "The 'Floating Dutchmen': The Netherlands Merchant Navy in the Pacific war," *Journal of Australian Naval History* 6, no. 1 (2009): 79–99.

81. Ford, *Allies in a Bind*, 61.

82. *De Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 2, Western Europe, chaps. 20 and 20A, 092 Marinemonografie, NL-HaNA, about the KM's involvement with the Dutch merchant marine.

83. Instruction R.N.N.L.O. Sydney of 27 March 1945, inv. nr. 74, 2.12.26, Marinecommandant Australië, NL-HaNA. This document is written in English.





*Figure 4. Rear Admiral Pieter Koenraad (1890–1968)*

[Courtesy of the Collection of the Netherlands Institute of Military History, image 073952]

### *Changes in Command*

Acting Rear Admiral Coster was relieved as MCA on 1 May 1943 by Acting Rear Admiral Pieter Koenraad (Figure 4). This relief was characterized in postwar testimony by his superior officer, then Vice Admiral Conrad Helfrich, as resulting from several factors. First, Coster had retired in 1935 and had been recalled to active duty due to the crisis in the NEI. There were several senior active duty KM officers without assignments commensurate to their rank who could assume the post of MCA. Second, the appointment of Coster to MCA was made by KM headquarters in London whereas Koenraad had been Helfrich's first choice to command in Australia. Third, there was friction between Coster and two senior Netherlands officials in Australia, the ambassador to Canberra and the de facto head of the NEI government-in-exile.<sup>84</sup> A September 1942 cable from the Dutch ambassador to Canberra, F. C. van Aerssen Beijeren van Voshol, to the Netherlands government in London requested Coster's relief. The ambassador, himself a retired naval officer, found Coster's leadership lacking.<sup>85</sup>

Rear Admiral Koenraad commanded all KM forces in Australia and served as deputy commander of all Dutch military forces in the Indian and Pacific Oceans until the arrival of Lieutenant General Ludolph van Oyen in November 1943.<sup>86</sup> General van Oyen had commanded the ML-KNIL in the NEI during the Japanese invasion. He arrived in Australia from the United States, where he

84. *Parlementaire enquêtecommissie regeringsbeleid 1940–1945*, 8C-II, 1096 (Conrad Emil Lambert Helfrich).

85. Telegram of 10 September 1942 from the ambassador to Canberra to the ministers of foreign affairs and colonies, inv. nr. 4775, Losse stukken, Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, The Hague.

86. Theo W. R. Doorman, ed., *In de schaduw van de Javazee: Brieven van viceadmiraal Pieter Koenraad naar bevrijd Nederland* (Zutphen, Netherlands: WalburgPers, 2018). Admiral Koenraad wrote twenty-seven letters to his family in the Netherlands from May 1945 to May 1946 that described his naval career and travels from 1939 to 1945.

had overseen the training of Dutch military and naval aircrew destined for service in Australia. General van Oyen became deputy commander of all Dutch armed forces in the Indian and Pacific Oceans due to his seniority over Koenraad.

The surrender of Japan in mid-August 1945 allowed Dutch military and naval forces to return to the NEI. Rear Admiral Koenraad was selected to be the temporary commander of all naval forces in the NEI, which necessitated relief as MCA on 1 October 1945 by his chief of staff, Captain H. A. van Foreest. In turn, Captain van Foreest was needed for an important position in the Netherlands and was relieved by Acting Commander B. J. G. Schokking on 5 August 1946. Schokking held the position until the drawdown of KM forces in Australia no longer warranted a separate command.

### **The Immediate Postwar Period**

While Japan surrendered in August 1945, the KM was not immediately able to return to the NEI. Japanese soldiers were still in charge of most of the NEI and the Netherlands lacked the forces to occupy and disarm the Japanese. For the short term, Dutch naval forces would remain based in Ceylon and Australia.

As Allied forces occupied Japan and areas in East Asia and Southeast Asia that had been under Japanese control, POW camps were liberated. These men were in extremely poor health due to the three and a half years of brutality and deprivation inflicted by their Japanese captors.<sup>87</sup> The Dutch colonial government of the NEI sought and obtained permission from the Australian government to evacuate former POWs and internees from the NEI to Australia for recuperation in a temperate climate for three to six months.<sup>88</sup> The first group of KM former POWs, twenty-seven men who had been held at Macassar on Celebes, arrived at Cairns on 21 September 1945 en route to Sydney.<sup>89</sup> The NEI representatives in Australia sought additional accommodation in September 1945 from Australian Army sources for the expected civilian and naval evacuees, but suitable camps were lacking.<sup>90</sup> The KM plan was to use some of the healthiest of the released prisoners who had family in the NEI or Australia to relieve KM personnel serving in Australia. Some of the KM personnel who served in Australia during the war had left the Netherlands between five and eight years earlier, and so were due to be repatriated as soon as former POWs were fit enough to provide reliefs.

Most of the Dutch warships stationed in Australia at the end of the war were submarines, including *K-XIV*, *K-XV*, *O-23*, and *O-24*. These vessels were

87. Oral history of naval aviator Leading Seaman Jan Sigvard van Os, collection number S03720, AWM, available digitally from the AWM website. This sound recording describes in great detail the horrific conditions in the Japanese POW camp at Makassar in Indonesia, and mentions his convalescence period in Australia.

88. Letter of 11 September 1945 from Australian Minister of External Affairs to Dutch ambassador to Australia, inv. nr. 93, 2.12.26, Marinecommandant Australië, NL-HaNA.

89. "Dutch Naval P.O.W. Reach Cairns," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 25 September 1945, 2.

90. Request for accommodation for recuperation of Netherlands East Indies civilians and naval personnel, 475165, MP742, NAA.

transferred to the NEI in September 1945 to help establish Dutch control over the islands and to provide their crews with the opportunity to contact family members who had spent the war in Japanese prison camps. Dutch submarines, destroyers, and cruisers made regular visits to Australian ports in late 1945 and 1946, with Fremantle a particularly common destination. These port visits were necessary for KM ships to be overhauled as maintenance facilities in the NEI were lacking or damaged by the war. The crews also benefitted from shore leave in cities that were not still damaged from the war, and those crewmen who had married Australian women during the war could visit their families.

The waters of the NEI were filled with mines, both Japanese and Allied, that had to be swept before ships could move safely in the archipelago. As the KM was short of minesweepers, it purchased eight Bathurst-class oceangoing minesweepers that served in the RAN during the war. These ships were transferred to the Dutch between January and July 1946.<sup>91</sup> The last four ships were transferred to the KM in Ceylon to avoid the labor complications found in Australian ports.<sup>92</sup>

The Australian government announced in July 1946 that all Dutch nationals would leave Australia except for permanent residents. All military personnel and wartime refugees from the NEI were included in the transfer, announced by the Australian minister for the navy.<sup>93</sup> Dutch citizens left Brisbane on several ships, both Dutch and Australian, over the next month, though many sought and found ways to remain in the country.

When Dutch forces did return to the NEI, there remained the need for supplies and equipment to support those forces. Almost all of this material support would come from Australia, transported on Dutch merchant and naval ships. About 4,000 tons of supplies arrived from Australia every three months. The *Bonaire*, a 3,164-ton merchant ship of the Dutch shipping company KNSM converted to a naval auxiliary, made six trips to Australia.<sup>94</sup>

As Indonesian nationalists began a campaign to end Dutch colonial rule, Australian labor unions refused to work on Dutch ships sailing for Java, declaring them “black.” Two rather prominent examples of Australian waterfront labor difficulties concerned the *Bonaire* and the destroyer *Piet Hein*. The *Bonaire* was to load stores for the NEI at Fremantle in late March 1946, but local stevedores refused to work. Dutch naval personnel eventually got the ship loaded, and it departed several weeks later. A labor boycott happened to this ship a second time in mid-August 1946.<sup>95</sup> The destroyer *Piet Hein* arrived at several major Australian

91. Royal Australian Navy, Ship Histories, accessed 30 March 2020, [www.navy.gov.au/fleet/ships-boats-crafts/available-ship-histories](http://www.navy.gov.au/fleet/ships-boats-crafts/available-ship-histories).

92. Transfer of [four] Minesweeping Vessels to Royal Netherlands Navy, 1076511, MP1049/5, NAA.

93. “All Dutch Nationals Leaving Australia,” *Northern Star*, 20 July 1946, 1.

94. R. E. van Holst Pellekaan and I. C. de Regt, *Operaties in de Oost: de Koninklijke Marine in de Indische archipel (1945–1951)* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2005), 78–79.

95. “Ban on Dutch Ships, Incident at Fremantle, Dutch Naval Men Left to Load *Bonaire*,” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 August 1946, 4.



ports in May and June 1946 in need of repairs after colliding with another ship. In each city the local waterfront unions refused to do the work so the ship sailed to the next port.<sup>96</sup> The ship ultimately returned to the NEI without having been fully repaired. The circumstances of this ship's failed quest for repairs strained the relationship between the Netherlands and Australian governments.

The Australian labor boycott of Dutch naval vessels and the gradual strengthening of the KM in the NEI resulted in the decision to close down the Dutch naval command in Australia effective 1 July 1946. Preparations for this action began 1 May of that year. The plan was that once the command stood down, small numbers of KM personnel would remain in Australia headed by a liaison officer in the rank of commander at Melbourne. Most of the personnel remaining at Melbourne and Perth would then be involved with purchasing and transporting materials to the NEI.<sup>97</sup>

The KM officer commanding in the NEI, Vice Admiral Albertus Pinke, issued further directives about the future of the MCA. Many of the subcommands such as aircraft and submarines had already left Australia, so for practical purposes the MCA was already closed. Clothing and food would be shipped from Fremantle to the NEI on the fleet auxiliary *Bonaire*. After the *Piet Hein* incident, the KM would no longer send ships to Australia to dock and give the crew leave. The exception to this policy was sending a destroyer to Fremantle every other month for a few weeks to give the crew shore leave and pick up supplies for the NEI. Ships were not to be sent to Australia's east coast, since there was more goodwill toward the KM on the west coast.<sup>98</sup>

Anticipating the need for future communication channels between the KM and RAN, the last officer serving as MCA supported the idea of the Dutch government appointing a naval attaché to Australia. The MCA noted that the lack of a naval attaché at Melbourne before the war necessitated a hasty appointment of a liaison officer not long before Japan began hostilities in the Pacific. The MCA observed that the USN was currently represented in Australia by a naval attaché and the KM should follow suit.<sup>99</sup>

The KM presence in Australia continued to dwindle, particularly once the headquarters in the Queens Mansions building at St. Kilda, Melbourne, was closed effective 1 November 1946. Remaining KM personnel were sent from Melbourne to Fremantle or left Australia. Liaison officers remained at Sydney and Brisbane.<sup>100</sup> On 15 August 1947 the MCA was replaced by the Naval Liquidation

96. Ross McDonald, "The Piet Hein, a Dutch Destroyer, Ship in Search of Aid," *West Australian*, 16 May 1946, 6.

97. Nota van M.C.A. of 30 April 1946, inv. nr. 79, 2.12.26, Marinecommandant Australië, NL-HaNA.

98. Boycot Nederlandsche Schepen in Australië of 17 July 1946, inv. nr. 79, 2.12.26, Marinecommandant Australië, NL-HaNA.

99. Memo from MCA to Dutch ambassador in Canberra of 30 July 1947, inv. nr. 79, 2.12.26, Marinecommandant Australië, NL-HaNA.

100. Organisatie Marine Commando Australië of 9 October 1946, inv. nr. 79, 2.12.26, Marinecommandant Australië, NL-HaNA.

Commission (Marine Liquidatie Commissie), headed by Engineer Lieutenant Commander Frans ter Horst.

Just before the final KM personnel departed Australia for the NEI, the Dutch sent a pair of signals to the RAN thanking that service for its assistance. A short message sent by the commander of the KM in the NEI expressed the personal appreciation of that officer, which was transmitted to the entire RAN via Commonwealth Navy Order 316 of 1947. A more detailed description of the help provided by the RAN to the KM was sent by the senior Dutch naval officer in Australia, Commander Schokking. This longer signal dated 11 August 1947 ended by saying, "I should like to express, on behalf of the Royal Netherlands Navy, my very sincere and deep gratitude for the ready assistance, advice and co-operation which the Royal Australian Navy has extended to us at all times. I feel sure that this happy association will long be remembered by all who had the pleasure and privilege of serving throughout the Commonwealth and the Pacific."<sup>101</sup>

A further expression of KM gratitude toward Australia occurred in early June 1948. Rear Admiral Gerlof Salm, the deputy commander of the KM in the NEI and the former KM liaison officer to Australia 1941–42, presented a painting of the light cruiser HMAS *Perth* to the RAN at a ceremony at Flinders Naval Depot. His remarks at the ceremony included an acknowledgment of the assistance given by the RAN to the KM, and the role HMAS *Perth* played in the NEI campaign before its loss shortly after the Battle of the Java Sea.<sup>102</sup>

The wartime collaboration between the armed forces of the Netherlands and Australia is commemorated by the Netherlands Australia Memorial. Dedicated fifty years after the start of the war in the Pacific, the memorial in Russell, Australian Capital Territory, names the individual Dutch armed services for their role in defending Australia during the war.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

To more completely understand the role played by the KM in Allied naval operations during World War II, and in the reestablishment of Dutch control over the NEI after the war, it is necessary to recognize the part played by its Australia command. Dutch-Australian naval contacts began soon after Australia's independence and continued sporadically until the imminent threat of war in the Pacific prompted collaboration in the form of weapons sales to the NEI, an exchange of liaison officers, limited deployments of forces to the other country's area of influence, and cooperation in ABDA Command. The Japanese assault on the NEI obliged the KM to move flight training to Australia for safety reasons,

101. Message of appreciation from RNN, 6006330, MP151/1, NAA. Commander Schokking's message also indicates that about 1,000 KM sailors married Australian women during the war.

102. "Schilderij voor de Australische Marine," *Alles Hens* 2, no. 1 (1948): 15. See also "Perth Honoured," *Daily News* (Perth, Western Australia), 9 June 1948, 8.

103. Monuments Australia, accessed 30 March 2020, [www.monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/ww2/display/90172-netherlands-australia-memorial](http://www.monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/ww2/display/90172-netherlands-australia-memorial).

and soon the collapse of Allied military resistance in the NEI forced the KM to evacuate its forces to Ceylon or Australia. Forces arriving in Australia included three submarines, four minesweepers, a flotilla leader, a naval auxiliary, about a dozen flying boats, and hundreds of personnel evacuated aboard merchant ships.

Rear Admiral Frederik Coster, already in Australia as leader of a Dutch delegation to purchase military equipment for the NEI, assumed command of all Dutch military and naval forces in Australia. This command was limited to administrative matters as operational command was held by Australian, later American, officers. While KM flight training was moved to the United States, the Dutch operated small numbers of ships from major Australian ports for the rest of the war. Fremantle was the largest concentration of KM forces, with minesweepers and a small squadron of cruisers and destroyers for the period 1942–43. Submarines later arrived for duty landing intelligence parties or for combat patrols in the NEI. The Dutch naval command in Australia was responsible for oversight of the country's merchant marine and posted officers for NCOS and liaison duties around the country. The parts of the NEI that either were not occupied by the Japanese, or were liberated from the enemy, also were overseen by the KM command in Australia.

The end of the war resulted in a steady reduction in the KM forces stationed in Australia as they were sent to the NEI or to Europe. Naval personnel recovered from Japanese POW camps were brought to Australia to convalesce in a temperate climate. The KM purchased eight oceangoing minesweepers from the RAN to help clear the NEI of mines. Australia remained a vital source of supplies of all sorts for the KM in the NEI, in spite of Australian waterfront labor protests over the matter of Indonesian independence, until the closure of the Dutch naval command in 1947.

The relative lack of attention to the KM presence in Australia in Dutch language studies might suggest that the naval command there was relatively unimportant. Four factors indicate that the Australian command was more important to the KM than the literature indicates. First, during the several decades leading up to World War II, about two-thirds of the entire KM (including most of its larger ships) was stationed in the NEI. The NEI was effectively the center of gravity for the KM, and its loss created a need for a new point of concentration. This was partially filled by the establishment of the KM headquarters and forces in Britain, and Vice Admiral Helfrich's headquarters in Ceylon, but for forces outside of Europe the Australia command was a new center of gravity.

Second, Australia played three important roles for the KM during the years 1942–47. It began as a place of refuge during the desperate days of late February and early March 1942 as Japanese forces prepared to encircle Java. With the establishment of a naval headquarters in Melbourne, Australia became an administrative and training center for KM forces in and near the country. From the Japanese surrender to 1947, Australia was a vital supply depot for the NEI and the growing KM forces in the islands.

Third, the Australia command was important enough to the KM that it promoted the commanding officer from captain to acting rear admiral upon



appointment to the post. Both Frederik Coster and Pieter Koenraad could have carried out their duties in the rank of captain, but were made flag officers. This could have been done for a variety of reasons unrelated to the relative importance of the Australia command to the KM, but the rank of a naval officer is often an indication of the importance of an officer's assignment.

Fourth, the Australia command covered a vast area. It included all of Australia and its adjacent ocean areas plus parts of the NEI as they were liberated from the Japanese.

The presence of the KM in Australia had significance beyond the navy itself. For the Netherlands, if the KM had not established itself in Australia upon the loss of the NEI, the Netherlands would have had a much more difficult time regaining control over its largest colony. In turn, that could have hastened Indonesian independence.

For Australia, the Dutch naval presence, however small, helped safeguard the country from Japanese attack when the Allies were reeling from Japanese offensives. After the war ended, it also helped establish a stream of immigrants from the Netherlands and the NEI, which diversified Australia culturally beyond its British and aboriginal base. Many KM personnel served in Australia at some point during the war, particularly in Western Australia. Some Dutch naval personnel, especially those who were from the NEI, settled in Australia after the war rather than return to live in the newly (1949) independent country of Indonesia.<sup>104</sup> These former naval personnel joined with veterans of the other Dutch services to form the Australian branch of the Netherlands Ex-Servicemen's and Women's Association (NESWA).

104. For the experiences of Dutch servicemen who later settled in Australia, see Doug Hurst, *The Fourth Ally: The Dutch Forces in Australia in WWII* (self-published, 2001).

