

Netherlands Mail in Times of Turmoil
Volume 2 1795–1815
The French Napoleonic Era



by Kees Adema RDP FRPSL

Published by The Stuart Rossiter Trust 2011
ISBN 978-0-5945207-6-2

The 450-page full colour second volume of the author's trilogy includes extensive historical background with never-before published illustrations as well as a 27-page catalogue of French, English and Dutch military and semi-military markings.



Contemporary cartoon of Napoleon reviewing his new army on Elba.

Where Volume 1 of the Times of Turmoil trilogy covered a period of over two centuries, Volume 2, the French Napoleonic Era, spans only two decades. Yet it can hardly be matched in earthshaking significance because of the almost constant state of war, countless battles and peace treaties, reshuffled allegiances and political alignments, the creation of vassal states and annexations.

The period from 1795-1815 saw many changes in The Netherlands. Some of the towns located in what is the current Dutch province of Limburg were occupied and then annexed in 1795 to become part of the Departments of the Lower Meuse and the Roer while the rest of the old Republic of The Netherlands would



Letter dated May 1808 from Amsterdam to Batavia where it arrived in 1811 when the Dutch East Indies were occupied by Raffles.

be known as the Batavian Republic until the summer of 1806. The author has provided detailed background information of the various military units and analysed their field post and other markings using letters from a large variety of sources including his own collection.

Napoleon placed his brother Louis on the Dutch throne in 1806 in what turned out to be an unsuccessful experiment that ended with the King



Cantinière love letter dated 1813 from a Frisian soldier to his fiancé; after having waited for him for seven years she married someone else in 1820.

of Holland's abdication in 1810. From a postal history point of view this four year period is lacking in military aspects although the Dutch were involved in repelling the Anglo invasion in Walcheren and sent troops to Spain to fight in the Peninsular War.

Following the abolition of the Kingdom of Holland in 1810 Napoleon unceremoniously annexed the country by the Rambouillet Decree and it would remain part of France until the French departure from Dutch soil in the autumn of 1813. William Frederic, son of the last Stadholder William V, returned from exile in Great Britain in November 1813. In an effort to thwart future French expansion plans the allies opted for the creation

of a buffer state to France's north and combined the former Dutch Republic, the former Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) and a few smaller territorial entities into the Kingdom of the United Netherlands in 1815. In a break with the past the former exile assumed power as King William I rather than William VI.

In addition to extensive coverage of military and political events and their effects on the delivery of letters, this volume, like its predecessor, depicts the human or rather inhuman aspects of war. Excerpts are quoted from letters written from the battle zones, the subject of women and orphans in the army is addressed as are the hardships of the Russian campaign.



18 September 1812: only recorded letter from French-occupied Moscow to Amsterdam.

May writing about war help to prevent it in the future.

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