

Arson in the Archipelago

Burning and destruction by Dutch armed forces during the Dutch-Indonesian war 1945-1949



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¹ **Photo Titelpage** Armed Marines run through a burning kampong in Soerabaja, Java. Who set the houses on fire is unclear. 1946-06-22, photo by H.A. Wilmar, Mariniersbrigade. Via: NIMH Beeldbank, objectnummer 2174-0259 <<https://nimh-beeldbank.defensie.nl>> visited on 28-09-2019.

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Introduction

During the Dutch-Indonesian war (1945-1949) arson and destruction can be seen as a permanent part of the Dutch colonial politics of violence aimed at deterrence and collective punishment.² Thus concludes Dutch/Swiss historian Rémy Limpach in his book *The burning kampongs of General Spoor* on ‘extreme violence’ during this war. Despite the title, ‘extreme violence’ in general, rather than the use of fire in particular, is the main theme of the book. Only a small part of the book is explicitly dedicated to arson by the Dutch.³ Nonetheless throughout this book, and in significant other publications on this war, arson is a recurring theme. Before returning to the rest of the historiography and the main research question there will be a brief introduction to the Dutch-Indonesian war, of which there will be a more detailed account in the first chapter.

After the Japanese capitulation on the 15th of August 1945 Indonesian nationalist leaders Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia on August 17th. At this point the Dutch had no military presence in their former colony, as most Europeans had been confined to camps by the Japanese during World War 2. British troops of the Allied South East Asia Command (SEAC) under Lord Louis Mountbatten were made responsible for the temporary governance after Japanese capitulation. However, their presence was far too small for the changed situation, and the violence of the *bersiap* period soon began. The violence was directed at all ethnic groups associated with Dutch colonial rule, while Indonesian groups also fought amongst themselves. The English left in the second half of 1946 and by then the Dutch government had rebuilt part of their former colonial forces, the *Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger* (Royal Netherlands Indies Army) (KNIL), and were expanding their troops with men from the Netherlands.⁴

Four years of war followed during which the Dutch tried to reclaim their former colony, largely because of their interest in the economic benefits and the international stature that had come with it. It was the largest military operation ever undertaken by The Netherlands at a point in time when the country was only just freed from German occupation itself.⁵ In total the Dutch mobilised over 200.000 men and the war turned into a grim counter-

² R. Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) 439.

³ *Ibidem*, 433-439.

⁴ G. Oostindie, I. Hoogenboom and J. Verwey, ‘The decolonization war in Indonesia, 1945-1949: War crimes in Dutch veterans’ egodocuments’, *War in History* 25:2 (2018) 254-276 there 256.

⁵ T. Brocades Zaalberg, ‘The civil and military dimensions of Dutch counterinsurgency on Java, 1947-49’, *British Journal for Military History*, 1, 2 (2015) 67-83 there 67.

guerrilla campaign during which both sides resorted to various atrocities which included executions, torture and arson.⁶ The Dutch undertook two large military offensives on Java and Sumatra, in July-August 1947 and December 1948- January 1949, that won them much territory but especially in the vast countryside their position was never very secure. The Dutch troops were outnumbered and overstretched fighting both the Indonesian Republican armed forces the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI) and various local militias and other irregular groups that also fought amongst themselves. The war proved impossible to win for the Dutch and in addition the large offensives and other developments had lost them almost all support on the international stage by 1949. Thus they were finally forced to transfer sovereignty to Indonesia in December 1949.⁷

By now this is seventy years ago and aside from the book by Limpach many scholarly articles and books on this war concerning ‘excessive violence’ by the Dutch troops have been published, with a reinvigorated interest in the last decade. Although arson has been a recurring theme no publications on the war of decolonization in Indonesia are specifically focused on burning and destruction. Therefore in this thesis arson will be investigated in depth, and while a number of sub-questions will play a role in different chapters the main research question will be: What form of violence is arson, to what extent was arson structural, and what were the various motivations for the Dutch military for the burning of habitation during the Dutch-Indonesian war 1945-1949?

This way the research question analytically distinguishes between three concepts that are interconnected and gradually become more specific. In the Dutch debate on the decolonization war arson is often considered as a ‘form’ of ‘excessive violence’.⁸ Thus arson usually falls in with other ‘forms’ of ‘excessive violence’ that cause direct bodily harm such as executions, murder and torture of prisoners.⁹ Although losing a home has a severely negative impact on the persons involved, it is of a different gravity than being tortured or killed. Therefore under concepts and methodology an alternative concept will be proposed that distinguishes arson and other forms of violence that have a significant negative impact on a person’s life from those that cause direct bodily harm. The next part of the question treats to what extent arson by the Dutch armed forces was structural. The debate about Dutch military

⁶ R. Limpach, ‘Extreem Nederlands militair geweld tijdens de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog 1945-1949: “Bregung erover en zo gauw mogelijk naar Holland”’, *Militaire spectator* 185:10 (2016) 416-429 there 416, 417.

⁷ Oostindie, Hoogenboom and Verwey, ‘Decolonization’, 257.

⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 45.; G. Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië 1945-1950. Getuigenissen van een oorlog aan de verkeerde kant van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2015) 7.

⁹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 8.; Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 313.

violence has been going on for fifty years and one of the central questions has always been to what extent ‘excessive violence’ was structural.¹⁰ This is also the research question Limpach used in his book and he fits it into a threefold scale: incidental, structural or systematic. He argues that the use of the term ‘excesses’ implied it was incidental, while structural means it regularly reappeared because of an atmosphere that was permissive, with ambiguous orders and the absence of investigation or prosecution. By systematic he means it was part of a larger deliberate strategy, and followed a regular pattern, a system, which was either openly condoned or tolerated within the chain of command.¹¹ The apparent contradiction that burning and destruction was strictly prohibited according to the Dutch army manual, and the fact that Dutch marines that were convicted to lengthy prison sentences for refusing to burn down an Indonesian village, makes this question both complicated and interesting.¹² Then the last part, the most basic level, concerns the different motivations for arson by the Dutch armed forces. In some cases the motives are explicitly given by the military personnel involved, while in other cases these have to be extracted in other ways. In addition the motives that are provided, are not necessarily the only motives, because they could have served as a justification towards the outside world while there were other underlying motives. Finally this thesis will endeavour to discover whether there was a dominant motivation for arson among the Dutch armed forces.

During the war of decolonization in Indonesia fire was used as a weapon by almost all parties involved, but this thesis will focus on the deliberate destruction of civilian habitation by the Dutch military. The focus will be on arson, of which a definition is: ‘the criminal act of deliberately setting fire to property’.¹³ Other deliberate and direct methods of destruction such as blowing up bulldozing or cutting down houses will not be excluded, since the effects and intentions are essentially the same. For analytical purposes destruction with ‘heavy weapons’, such as bombardment by air, artillery, or ship will not feature in this thesis. These methods are

¹⁰ B. Luttikhuis, and C.H.C. Harinck, ‘Voorbij het koloniale perspectief. Indonesische bronnen en het onderzoek naar de oorlog in Indonesië, 1945-1949’, *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 132:2 (2017) 51-76 there, 55.

¹¹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 738.

¹² *Voorschrift voor de uitoefening van de politiek-politionele taak van het leger (VPTL) (herdruk uitgave KNIL)* (Utrecht 1945), Chef van den Generalen staf, 27.; J. Bank, *De Excessennota: nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië begaan door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945-1950*. (Den Haag 1995). [Heruitgave van de in 1969 aan de Tweede Kamer aangeboden nota] 76.

¹³ Oxford Dictionary: ‘Arson’ <<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/arson>> 18-09-2019.

much more indirect and both the effects and the intentions are often much harder to establish.¹⁴

Historiography

In the academic literature on colonial wars arson and other means of destruction are also often discussed together. For instance American historian Brian McAllister Linn writes that during the Philippine war (1899-1902) crop and property destruction by American troops was euphemistically called ‘burning’.¹⁵ The literature that analyses or theorizes specifically about burning and destruction by regular armed forces in a colonial context is scarce, except for some conflicts where ‘scorched earth’ tactics were used. There are sources on fire and human society in general, notably the book *Fire and civilization* by Johan Goudsblom that also deals briefly with arson and the use of fire during colonial wars.¹⁶ Goudsblom argues that this display of power also indicates an element of impotence since colonial troops were trying to force an unruly population into compliance.¹⁷ British historian Gemma Clark specifically writes about arson during the Irish civil war (1922-1923) in a chapter titled ‘The campaign of fire’.¹⁸ However, in her book arson is a ‘rebel-strategy’ used by the Irish Republicans against the British loyalists.

The best known ‘scorched earth campaigns’ by colonial powers happened predominantly around the turn of the nineteenth century. During the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) the destruction of all sources of livelihood of their Boer-opponents was part of a strategy by the British imperial forces.¹⁹ The British destroyed tens of thousands of farms and outbuilding and carried off or killed the livestock, while they also destroyed dozens of towns and villages. By destroying everything that could be of assistance to the Boer-guerrilla, the British hoped to impair their opponents’ ability and will to fight on. In combination with other measures such as internment camps this eventually lead to British victory. South-African historian André Wessels argues that since the farms and villages had indeed very actively

¹⁴ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 163.

¹⁵ B. McAllister Linn, *The Philippine war 1899-1902* (Lawrence, Kansas 2000) 214.

¹⁶ J. Goudsblom, *Vuur en beschaving* (Amsterdam 1992) 189-193 and 216-219; See also: S.J. Pyne, *Vestal fire. An environmental history, told through fire, of Europe an Europe’s encounter with the world* (London 1997).

¹⁷ Goudsblom, *Vuur*, 219.

¹⁸ G. Clark, *Everyday violence in the Irish civil war* (Cambridge 2014) 54-98.

¹⁹ Pretorius, F., ‘The Anglo-Boer War: an overview’, in: F. Pretorius ed. *Scorched Earth* (Cape Town 2001) 10-36 there 28.

supported the Boer commandos these were legitimate military targets.²⁰ There is also research to be found on the Aceh-war (1873-1904), where the Dutch used fire during punitive campaigns and as ‘environmental warfare’ by destroying all means of existence to discourage their opponent from further resistance.²¹ The Aceh-war will be discussed more elaborately in the first chapter.

Aside from the literature on the above mentioned conflicts, few works analyse arson by colonial troops any further, despite the fact that it has been argued the destruction of houses and complete settlements were a regular part of imperial wars.²² According to German historian Dierk Walter during destructive punitive expeditions, that were mainly intended to demonstrate imperial dominance, the population was often held collectively responsible for any form of violence against the colonizer.²³ While he argues in other cases the destruction can be considered to be stemming from sheer indifference towards the population when pursuing the enemy.²⁴

As already mentioned, in the academic debate on the war of decolonization in Indonesia, burning and destruction by Dutch troops is a recurring theme, but like in the literature on other colonial wars it is not often separately analysed. Usually it is part of the literature that deals with ‘excessive violence’ by Dutch troops. The participants in the debate about Dutch colonial violence have been predominantly Dutch scholars.²⁵ Academic literature by Indonesian authors and non-Dutch Western literature differs in perspective from the Dutch literature and is usually not specifically interested in the reasons for Dutch military atrocities.²⁶ The Dutch scholarly debate has been going on since the 1970’s, first triggered by the revelations of psychologist and veteran of the war J.E. Hueting in 1969 on Dutch national television.²⁷

²⁰ A. Wessels, ‘Boer guerrilla and British counter guerrilla operations in South Africa, 1899 to 1902’, *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, 39:2 (2011) 1-24 there 12,13.

²¹ Kreike, E., ‘Genocide in the kampongs? Dutch nineteenth century colonial warfare in Aceh, Sumatra’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:3-4 (2012) 297-315.; A. Harmanny, ‘Een “voorbeeldloze tuchtiging”: het militaire optreden van Karel van der Heijden in Atjeh’, *Mars et Historia* 43:3 (2009) 15-23.

²² D. Walter, (Translated by Peter Lewis), *Colonial violence. European empires and the use of force* (London 2017) 152.

²³ Ibidem, 123.

²⁴ Ibidem, 165.

²⁵ Oostindie, Hoogenboom and Verwey, ‘Decolonization’, 260.

²⁶ R. Cribb, ‘Margins of extreme violence’, Reviews of R. Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor*, in: *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 173: 4, (2017) 565-568 there 566.

²⁷ S. Scagliola, ‘Cleo’s “unfinished business”: coming to terms with Dutch war crimes in Indonesia’s war of independence’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:3-4 (2012) 419-439 there 423.; Limpach, *Brandende kampong*, 21.

The national debate that unfolded quickly forced Dutch parliament to appoint an official commission to do archival research into the war.²⁸ Within three months a report, the *Excessennota*, was compiled that supposedly contained references to all documents on ‘excesses’ committed by the combined Netherlands armed forces in Indonesia during the entire conflict.²⁹ The choice of the term ‘excesses’ came from prime-minister Piet de Jong and was meant to imply that these were exceptions or ‘stand-alone’ cases.³⁰ It contained 110 individual cases based on internal investigations by the Dutch army and the judicial authorities within the army.³¹ Only four of those internal investigations concerned arson by Dutch troops, of which three did not lead to a court-case let alone a conviction for the destruction of Indonesian property.³² The motivations for arson provided by the Dutch army in these cases were ‘military necessity’ to create a wider field of fire, and to restrain the population from assisting the opponent. Other reasons for the destruction of property were the imperative to destroy houses to make them uninhabitable for ‘gangs’, often because ammunition, equipment and/or enemy documents had been present in a house or *kampong* (village).³³ The concept of ‘military necessity’ is usually invoked when specific situations ‘force’ a commander to ignore the laws of war according to his own judgement.³⁴ In the fourth case three marines had been ordered by their direct superior to burn down the *kampong* Pakisadji in East-Java for reasons of ‘military necessity’. They objected on moral and religious grounds because they regarded it as a reprisal against innocent civilians and were sentenced to prison for between 1,5-2,5 years for refusing to obey an order.³⁵

The *Excessennota* was followed by a groundbreaking historical-sociological study *The Netherlands/Indonesian conflict. Derailment of violence* by J.A.A. van Doorn en W.J. Hendrix published in 1970.³⁶ Shocked by the violent methods they had encountered these veterans of the 1945-1949 conflict had amassed information during their service, and now considered the time ripe to finish and publish their research.³⁷ According to these authors

²⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 29.

²⁹ Bank, *Excessennota*.; Scagliola, ‘Cleo’s’, 424.

³⁰ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 45.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 29.

³² Bank, *Excessennota*, 83, 98, 101.; J.A.A. van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix, *Het Nederlands/Indonesisch conflict. Ontsporing van geweld*. 2^{de} aangevulde druk (Dieren 1983) 261.

³³ Bank, *Excessennota*, 99, 103.

³⁴ The concept of ‘military necessity’ will be further discussed in chapters 1 and 4 with the proper references.

³⁵ Bank, *Excessennota*, 76.

³⁶ Doorn, van, and Hendrix, *Ontsporing*.

³⁷ S. Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog. De Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Rotterdam 2002) 202.

burning down random houses and *kampongs* by Dutch troops was a regular part of ‘sweeps’ and ‘purgings’, however, they state the targets were usually completely random houses. They also write that the Dutch often used arson as a form of collective punishment against villages when these failed to provide them with information on enemy movement after the Dutch had made this compulsory.³⁸ In a case-study of an anonymised company that operated ‘somewhere on Java’ the authors observed that although the men became less reluctant over time burning was never done on their own initiative. The orders always came from the company and platoon commanders or the intelligence section that was closely connected to the company commander.³⁹

In 1984 the next important scholarly book on ‘excesses’ during this war was published based on a master thesis by historian Willem IJzereef. The book deals with the methods of the Dutch commando’s, *Depot Special Troepen* (DST), during the ‘Zuid-Celebes-affair’ in 1946-1947 during which at least 3.500 Indonesians were killed within a couple of months.⁴⁰ IJzereef focuses on the ‘summary executions’ during these actions, while he also notes that burning down houses, where firearms were found was part of the action plans.⁴¹ Jaap de Moor’s 1999 dissertation further analyses the role of the Dutch commando’s during the course of the war. He also writes that arson was part of the operational plans in Zuid-Celebes.⁴² While he also notes that burning down *kampongs* for harbouring enemy fighters was part of the orders of the commando’s during actions in Krawang, East-Java, in December 1947 and January 1948.⁴³

Peter Keppy’s 2006 book *Traces of destruction*, stands out here because it is not perpetrator centred but focuses on the damage done.⁴⁴ However, Keppy mainly focuses on the payment of material war damages and redress for Western corporations.⁴⁵ While he also recognizes that Dutch troops caused large damage in the Javanese villages in the countryside, he writes that this is hardly traceable in the official Dutch military reports. He does provide some examples of the Dutch burning down villages found in Indonesian sources.⁴⁶

³⁸ Doorn, van, and Hendrix, *Ontsporing*, 303-322.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 316, 319, 322.

⁴⁰ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 99.

⁴² J.A. de Moor, *Westerling’s Oorlog. Indonesië 1945-1950. De geschiedenis van de commando’s en parachutisten in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1950* (Amsterdam 1999) 139-142, 153.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 241.

⁴⁴ P. Keppy, *Sporen van vernieling, oorlogsschade, roof en rechtsherstel in Indonesië 1940-1957* (Amsterdam 2006).

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 233.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 71.

Only in the last couple of years the debate on ‘excessive’ violence has really been reinvigorated, with several authors also writing about arson by Dutch troops. Already mentioned is Rémy Limpach’s 2016 *The burning kampongs of General Spoor*, based on his German language dissertation, which is probably considered the most important work on Dutch ‘excessive violence’ during the war of decolonization in Indonesia.⁴⁷ Like other ‘forms’ of ‘excessive violence’ examples of arson are abundant throughout the book. According to Limpach burning down houses, villages and supplies happened on a daily basis, so he argues it was structural while in some cases even systematic.⁴⁸ He also states that this is registered in countless military reports that are still in the archives today, while he argues this was often condoned and ordered from higher up. However, he does not provide examples of the military reports or of the orders. To create a better understanding of these cases of arson, he refers to unofficial sources such as diaries, letters and memoirs.⁴⁹

In the most recent debate several articles and books were published that, like Limpach, make use of ‘egodocuments’ of Dutch veterans of this war in which the authors have found reports of arson by Dutch troops.⁵⁰ Dutch historian Thijs Brocades Zaalberg concludes that arson was a form of collective punishment that was either meant to be a deterrent, or as reprisal for Dutch losses.⁵¹ For the book *Soldaat in Indonesië* by Gert Oostindie, his research institute the KITLV systematically searched through 659 published egodocuments looking for ‘war crimes’.⁵² Out of a total of 779 crimes they amassed in their database, there are 90 cases of arson.⁵³ Around twenty quotes about arson made it into the book. Out of those there is only one marine who states that ‘orders to burn down everything on the slightest suspicion came from the highest echelons of army command’. However, according to Oostindie intentionally ‘vague instructions’ can be seen as something that contributed to ‘war crimes’.⁵⁴ Unpublished egodocuments will play a large role in the third chapter of this thesis. There will be a

⁴⁷ The publication of the book was a large factor in receiving government funding for the current research program: ‘Independence, decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia, 1945-1950’ via: < <https://www.ind45-50.org/> > visited on 15-10-2019.

⁴⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 709, 737.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 437, 439, 642, 697.

⁵⁰ T. Brocades Zaalberg, ‘In de Oost 1946-1950’, in: B. Schoenmaker red., *200 jaar Koninklijke Landmacht, 1814-2014* (Amsterdam 2014) 138-159.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*.; Oostindie, *Soldaat*.; Oostindie, Hoogenboom and Verwey, ‘Decolonization’.

⁵¹ Brocades Zaalberg, ‘In de Oost’, 147, 148.

⁵² Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 309, 319.

⁵³ Ibidem, 150, 317. 4 reports of arson by individual soldiers outside of the regular military actions. Oostindie, 163,187. 36 reports of arson during regular military operations during patrols and guard duty. Oostindie 190,199. 50 reports during ‘special operations’: purges and larger sweeps. Oostindie, 215.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, 167, 173.

quantitative comparison with the published egodocuments used by Oostindie to see if there is a difference in the average amount of cases of arson reported on per author between published and unpublished accounts. In 2017 Luttikhuis & Harinck did some pioneering work by comparing cases they found in Indonesian archival sources with the Dutch colonial archives.⁵⁵ The authors write that according to Indonesian sources arson by Dutch patrols was daily practice, while this is practically untraceable in official Dutch sources.⁵⁶

Based on the accumulated literature some preliminary answers to the main research question can be given. What ‘form’ of violence arson was will be treated in the next paragraph, thus here the second and third part will be discussed. Most authors agree that arson was daily practice, which would make it at least a structural part of Dutch actions. Limpach concludes that in some units it even was systematic, but many other authors think acts of burning and destruction are untraceable in the official records, which would make this hard to prove. Combined the motivations for burning down houses are:⁵⁷

1. Houses were destroyed if the opponent had used them as camps.
2. If weapons, propaganda or other subversive materials were found in houses.
3. To take revenge and/or set an example when the population had supported the opponent or not informed the Dutch.
4. To deter the population from assisting the opponent.
5. ‘Military necessity’ to create a wider ‘field of fire’.

⁵⁵ Luttikhuis and Harinck, ‘Koloniale perspectief’, 51.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, 65, 67.

⁵⁷ To avoid unnecessary repetition if a certain motive for arson is provided by an earlier author these are not named for later works within the historiography.

Concepts and terminology

In the previous historiography the term ‘excessive violence’ is predominantly used to avoid confusion. This term and other terms require further explanations to provide clarity since different terminology has been used by different authors in the Dutch debate. Furthermore there is no ‘sub-category’ of excessive violence, on which there is some sort of consensus in the Dutch or in the international academic literature, to distinguish between non-corporeal violence that nonetheless has severe negative effects on people, as opposed to corporeal violence towards people. Since this thesis is about arson, or burning and destruction of civilian property, it will be useful to establish such a category. This will be valuable to establish the gravity of arson compared to other forms of violence. First the Dutch debate on generic terminology will be discussed before a proposition for a ‘form’ or ‘category’ for non-physical violence will be made.

‘Excessive violence’ is a generic term used for violence outside of direct combat between warring military parties. It is used to indicate actions directed at non-combatants (civilians) or against combatants that were captured or disarmed and that are considered unacceptable according to the laws of war.⁵⁸ However, different terminology such as ‘excessive violence’, ‘extreme violence’, ‘mass violence’ or ‘war crimes’ have been used by different authors in the Dutch debate that all essentially indicate violence that transgresses the laws of war. Since the term ‘excesses’ was euphemistically used by the Dutch government to emphasize it was ‘incidental’, ‘excessive violence’ has lost traction in the most recent Dutch literature on this conflict.⁵⁹ Therefore Limpach opted for an alternative; he almost interchangeably uses the terms ‘extreme violence’ and ‘mass violence’, while Oostindie used ‘war crimes’.⁶⁰ Limpach acknowledged that there is a difference between physical violence against non-combatants and prisoners, and offenses that are non-physical like plunder, destruction and theft. Based on the work of Christian Gerlach he argues they are connected to murder in such different ways that they should not be analytically detached. Thus Limpach regards arson as a ‘form’ of ‘mass violence’, while Oostindie sees arson as a ‘type’ of war crime, while the other ‘types’ both authors distinguish are, except for robbery/plunder, actions that kill or inflict direct bodily harm.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 27.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 45.

⁵⁹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 225, 227, 389, 430.

⁶⁰ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 7; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 45.

⁶¹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 45.; Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 313.

In the Dutch debate only Luttikhuis & Harinck place arson together with theft in a completely different category which they call ‘low-key violence’.⁶² When writing specifically about arson and destruction in many cases the connection with murder like Gerlach and Limpach make is perhaps too grave, while the equation with theft falls short of the impact of arson. Therefore for this thesis the alternative concept of ‘disruptive violence’ will be proposed. This is inspired by a presentation delivered by British historian Karl Hack.⁶³ Hack argues that there is an analytical difference between violence as physical force towards non-combatants to kill or inflict bodily harm, and other acts that have significant negative impacts on peoples’ lives, but fall short of obvious direct bodily harm.⁶⁴ Based on ‘zemiology’ a branch of criminology, Hack uses the term ‘harm’ for the latter category.⁶⁵ Although largely agreeing with the ideas behind this in this thesis the term ‘disruptive violence’ will be introduced. Although it lacks the theoretical grounding of ‘harm’ it is less complicated and confusing, while the next paragraph will show that it is applicable to comparable forms of non-physical violence.

Destroying a house or a *kampong* with force makes people homeless and/or into refugees of war. Hack identifies similar actions that have a severe impact on the freedom and/or the livelihood of the civilian population during the Malayan Emergency.⁶⁶ Here this is adapted to actions by the Dutch armed forces that took place during the decolonization war in Indonesia which have similar negative effects on people’s lives:

1. Destruction or deprivation of civilian habitation by arson or other means.
2. Deprivation of liberty through detention without trial or mass internment.
3. Forced population removal.

These are all actions that took place during the Dutch-Indonesian war and severely affected the freedom and/or means of life of those people that fell victim to them. To show what exactly is meant by this some examples will be provided, while it is possible that there are other actions that could in the future also be included that can be considered similar in effect and gravity. In Zuid-Celebes, on Bali, and also on Java the Dutch randomly interned tens of

⁶² Luttikhuis and Harinck, ‘Koloniale perspectief’, 51.

⁶³ Used with permission from Karl Hack, professor in history at the Open University. Unpublished speaking paper, 20,21 June 2019 Amsterdam, ‘Malaya as a site for thinking about full-spectrum harm and violence in counterinsurgency and wars of decolonisation’. The concept of ‘disruptive violence’ and (mis)interpretation of Hacks work is entirely my own.

⁶⁴ Hack, ‘Speaking paper’, 2.

⁶⁵ Hack, ‘Speaking paper’, 6.

⁶⁶ Hack, ‘Speaking paper’, 4, 5.

thousands suspected rebels and political prisoners under grave conditions who were waiting for trial to no avail. Out of mistrust Dutch soldiers also preventively arrested many people including women and children. This led to overcrowded prisons where people lived under dire conditions.⁶⁷ Forced relocation by the Dutch was on a much different scale than, for instance, during the ‘Malayan Emergency’ (1948-1960) where the British moved hundreds of thousands Malaysians to ‘New Villages’.⁶⁸ The British mass ‘resettlement’ was intended to deprive the opponent of their population basis.⁶⁹ The Dutch only used these methods locally, for instance immediately after the ‘Zuid-Celebes affair’ in 1947 when they cleared certain departments of its inhabitants to isolate the resistance.⁷⁰ Thus ‘disruptive violence’ are acts that have a significant negative impact on peoples’ lives. Destruction of habitation, detention without trial, and forced relocation can all be regarded as acts that severely disrupt people's freedom of movement and/or means of life while they often have a temporary character. In general these acts by the army are intended to hurt the opponent by isolating them from the population and to deter the population from assisting the opponent.

Moving to motivations for arson by the Dutch armed forces an analytical difference, which can be made based on the work by Greek political scientist Stathis Kalyvas, who differentiates between indiscriminate and selective violence. Violence is selective when there is an intention to determine individual guilt, and indiscriminate when people are collectively targeted, especially during reprisals where people are found guilty by association.⁷¹ The question is whether these distinctions can be made in case of arson. It could be argued that for instance if ammunition was found in a certain house and therefore it was burned down by the Dutch army, it would be a case of selective violence. In another case an entire *kampong* was burned down because a Dutch patrol was attacked in its vicinity, an example of indiscriminate violence. However, in both instances it could be that the owner of a house had no influence on these occurrences and was the prime victim nonetheless. Recognizing these difficulties the distinction between indiscriminate and selective violence will still play a role in some cases throughout this thesis, because it can be an important difference when ascertaining the intentions of the Dutch army.

⁶⁷ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 256, 520, 655, 709, 774.

⁶⁸ K. Hack, ‘“Devils that suck the blood of the Malayan people’: The case for post-revisionist analysis of counter-insurgency violence’, *War in History* 25:2 (2018) 202-226 there 203.

⁶⁹ S.N. Kalyvas, *The logic of violence in civil war* (Cambridge 2006) 122.

⁷⁰ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 142.

⁷¹ Kalyvas, *Civil war*, 142.

These are the most important academic concepts and terms that will be used throughout this thesis. Before moving to the layout of the chapters first the sources used will be discussed. What is their origin and how should one approach them critically? These sources mainly present a Dutch perspective and therefore this will be also followed in spelling of names and places.

Methodology

In addition to the available secondary literature and printed primary sources, this thesis will predominantly be based on Dutch archival sources, and ‘egodocuments’ by Dutch soldiers. Where possible this will be complemented with English language Indonesian sources, since the language barrier excludes the use of sources written in the Indonesian language. The archives used are located in the National Archive (NA), The Hague, the archives of the NIMH, The Hague and the archive of the Koninklijk Instituut van Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV) located in the University Library (UB), Leiden. These archival records are mostly produced by members of the Dutch armed forces and Dutch (colonial) civil servants. In each chapter there will be a more specific description of the sources used and the way they were created.

In the first chapter laws and *Dagorders* (daily orders) by General Spoor, will play an important role. These are mainly found in the NA, in the archives of the *Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië* (Ministry of Defense, Armed Forces Dutch-East Indies), and the archives of the *Algemene Secretarie van de Nederlands-Indische Regering* (General Secretary of the Dutch East Indies Government). The latter was the administrative apparatus of the governor-general in the Dutch East Indies in Batavia.⁷² While in the second chapter original operational orders and reports will feature from the personal archives of Colonel H.J. de Vries (KNIL) that are now held at the NIMH. A large part of the second and fourth chapter will be based on internal investigations. Some of these are to be found in the archives of the Dutch Ministry of Justice since they have become part of the archival research into excesses in 1970. Others are still stored in the archives of the *Procureur-Generaal bij het Hooggerechtshof van Nederlands-Indië* (Prosecutor-General at the Supreme Court of the Dutch East Indies). Although the results of these internal investigations did not necessarily lead to consequences for those involved, the investigations themselves can be quite critical

⁷² Archives searchable via: < <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/> > visited on 21-11-2019.

and revealing and are therefore interesting material. The third chapter compares unpublished egodocuments with daily operational reports and orders from the archives of the Armed Forces Dutch-East Indies. The language in these sources is often short and in jargon, and therefore it is important to establish what exactly to look for.

The unpublished egodocuments used are also held at the NIMH.⁷³ The interest in egodocuments such as diaries, letters and memoirs has risen among historians in the last decades as also becomes clear from the most recent literature on this conflict. Although historians realize these are very subjective sources and only offer a personal truth, they are valuable when researching the perspective of the actors and their experiences.⁷⁴ Source criticism is essential, and since the Dutch colonial archives also demand a very critical approach comparing the two where possible will be attempted in the third chapter.

In these sources and much of the Dutch historiography the Dutch ‘colonial spelling’ is used which can create confusion compared to Indonesian orthography especially when also translated to English.⁷⁵ Therefore in accordance with the primary sources and following the work of Limpach in this thesis the old spelling from the Dutch colonial sources will be used. A common difference with Indonesian spelling is ‘oe’ and ‘u’ (Bandoeng, Bandung), in these sort of cases the modern name will not be added. Where the name is notably different, Batavia (Jakarta), Celebes (Sulawesi), Buitenzorg (Bogor), this will be indicated at least once. Also in accordance with Limpach the term ‘Indonesia’ will be used from the moment the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed on 17 August 1945, while before that moment the ‘Dutch East Indies’ will be used. ‘Republican’ must be regarded as all diplomats, armed forces and territories connected to the Republic of Indonesia, while other armed groups and militias will be indicated differently.⁷⁶ This thesis is an analysis of arson by Dutch armed forces, because of the research topic and the sources used it is predominantly the story from a Dutch perspective. Therefore the war will be predominantly be called ‘The Dutch-Indonesian war’ or ‘The war of decolonization in Indonesia’. When from an Indonesian perspective this would be the ‘Indonesian Revolution’ or the ‘The Indonesian war of Independence’.⁷⁷

⁷³ Archives searchable via: < <https://www.archieven.nl/nl/> > visited on 21-11-2019.

⁷⁴ Baggerman, A. en R. Dekker, ‘De gevaarlijkste van alle bronnen’. Egodocumenten: nieuwe wegen en perspectieven.’ Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis 1.4 (2004) 3-22 there 5, 9.

⁷⁵ A. Kahin, A. ed., *Regional dynamics of the Indonesian revolution* (Honolulu 1985) xi.

⁷⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 44.

⁷⁷ For instance: R. Cribb, *Gangsters and revolutionaries. The Jakarta people's militia and the Indonesian revolution 1945-1949* (Sydney 1991).

Layout of the chapters

The central research question for this thesis is built of three layers, in the first part the concept of ‘disruptive violence’ has been introduced. The second and third part on whether arson was structural, and the motivations for arson will be answered throughout the chapters. This research will also try to establish what the dominant motivation was for the Dutch troops when they resorted to arson. What different chapters intent to contribute to the research question will be very briefly discussed here.

Chapter 1 will be a genealogy of arson and its restraint in the Dutch East Indies. This chapter will first focus on Dutch arson during the ‘pacification’ of the Dutch East Indies (ca. 1815-1910), with special attention for the Aceh war (1873-1904) and the subsequent developments. The Dutch actions in this period, the ‘ethical period’ and the 1899 codification of the laws of war in Europe had a large influence on the theoretical restraints during the war of decolonization. Although the laws of war in a colonial context have often been ignored and discarded as inapplicable by the Europeans involved. This is followed by an account of the Dutch-Indonesian war, and the additional laws and restraints that intended to restrain arson then. The Dutch colonial laws and orders from general Spoor, the army commander, will also contribute to the question whether arson was structural.

In chapter 2 arson during the actions of the DST and the KNIL in the ‘Zuid-Celebes affair’ will be analysed. During a period of a little over two months in 1946-1947 at least 3.500 Indonesian were killed of whom many through summary executions. Naturally the attention in the historiography has been mainly directed at these executions, but the Dutch troops here also resorted to large scale arson. The, orders, practice and motivations will be discussed, while there will also be attention for impact and quantity. Since this is the first chapter on the 1945-1949 war it will be also be estimated what sort of an investment and loss a house was for those Indonesians that fell victim to Dutch acts of destruction.

In chapter 3 egodocuments by Dutch KL soldiers that served in the *1e divisie ‘7 December’* which was stationed in West-Java will play a large role. Cases of arson discussed in their diaries between 1947-1949 will be compared to orders, patrol reports and other official archival records of their units. It will be researched from what level up the chain of command the orders came, while there will also be some tentative conclusion on scale. Furthermore it is of interest whether there is a discrepancy between the private and the official records, between the different units, what the motivations were and whether there is a

dominant motive for arson in these sources. While there will also be attention for the private opinions on arson of the soldiers involved.

The last chapter will feature one of the few cases of arson that led to a large internal investigation and was therefore already mentioned in the *Excessennota*. In February 1949 Dutch troops burned down the remains of the village of Soengei Loear in the Riouw Residency on the east coast of Sumatra, after they had only arrived in the area a little over a month before after almost seven years of absence. The primary question of the investigation was whether the burning was the result of military necessity or intended as a punitive action. These concepts will be discussed in this chapter. Furthermore the case provides a lot of insight in under what circumstances Dutch civil servants and the military considered arson as justified or not and whether orders for arson came from higher up the chain of command. This way the chapters will follow a chronological order, although chapter 3 has some overlap with 4. In addition chapters 2-4 will be spread out over the Indonesian Archipelago; Zuid-Celebes, West-Java and East-Sumatra. There will be an introduction to the local situation in each chapter since these differed significantly. Each chapter will also treat different sections of the Dutch armed forces, respectively; the DST (and the KNIL), the KL and the KNIL. In the end this will hopefully make it possible to establish whether or not different sections of the Dutch armed forces acted similar when it comes to arson.

Chapter 1 A genealogy of arson and its restraints (1815-1949)

'On a certain day on which the rebels were beaten again, he wandered around in a village that was just conquered by the Dutch army, and thus was on fire.' Multatuli, 1860.⁷⁸

Former Dutch colonial civil servant Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820-1887) instantly became the most famous critic of the Dutch colonial policy in the East Indies when he published his 1860 novel *Max Havelaar* under the pseudonym Multatuli.⁷⁹ When he later mused about the accusations that his sentence about Dutch arson was called 'artsy' and 'pungent', he proclaimed he was not artsy and where his writing was pungent it was because the truth was pungent. He wrote he clearly intended to accuse the Dutch army of disgraceful behaviour in the places they conquered:

*'Yes, the village was conquered, and was thus on fire. After Dutch heroics follows fire. Dutch victory leads to destruction. Dutch military exploits bear despair.'*⁸⁰

Today we know these statements by Multatuli contain an uncomfortable truth on Dutch military operations at the time. In a 2018 book about five centuries of colonial wars in Indonesia Dutch journalist and author Piet Hagen writes that in many, if not all colonial wars the Dutch burned down *kampongs* on a large scale. Even though the practice of burning *kampongs* lead to heated debate, both among colonial servants as in the Netherlands, the practice was never abandoned.⁸¹ The Dutch started to use fire as a weapon almost as soon as they arrived in the Indonesian archipelago. In this chapter the focus will be on the end of the nineteenth century and the developments afterwards. Why did the Dutch use fire as a weapon in the Dutch East Indies? And how did the regulations meant to restrain burning and destruction during the Dutch-Indonesian war developed over time?

⁷⁸ *'Op zekeren dag dat de opstandelingen op-nieuw waren geslagen, doolde hy rond in een dorp dat pas veroverd was door het Nederlandsche leger, en dus in brand stond.'* Multatuli, *Max Havelaar of de koffiveilingen der Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij* (1860) (ed. Annemarie Kets) (Assen/Maastricht 1992) 202.

⁷⁹ H.W. van den Doel, *Zo ver de wereld strekt. De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee vanaf 1800* (Amsterdam 2011) 76.

⁸⁰ Multatuli, *Ideën van Multatuli*, Eerste bundel (Vijfde druk, Amsterdam 1872) Idee 304.

⁸¹ P. Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen in Indonesië. Vijf eeuwen verzet tegen vreemde overheersing* (Amsterdam 2018) 304.

The 'pacification' of the Dutch East Indies

Most of the former territorial possessions of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in South East Asia were returned to the recently established Kingdom of the Netherlands by the British in 1814. Over time, several factors induced the Dutch to conquer and rule almost the entire territory of the modern Republic of Indonesia by 1910, such as ambitious officials, colonial prestige, the European scramble for colonies and most of all economic reasons.⁸² There was a large acceleration in territorial gain between 1871-1910, the time of 'New Imperialism', when with modern communication, faster supply-lines and the latest artillery innovations the whole archipelago was brought under control.⁸³ During many of these smaller and larger wars arson by the Dutch colonial forces played an important role in subjugating the population. Here the focus will mainly be on the larger conflicts where arson was an important part of a larger strategy.

The first big challenge the Dutch faced in the East Indies was a popular uprising in central Java that started in 1825 under Yogyanese Prince Diponegoro (1785-1855).⁸⁴ The Dutch general in command lieutenant-general H.M. De Kock (1779-1845) was instructed by the highest authority in the Dutch East Indies, governor-general L.P.J. du Bus de Gisignies (r. 1826-1830), to refrain from arson, not for moral reasons but because the burning and destruction of villages would only turn the population against them.⁸⁵ De Kock decided it was more important to instil fear into the population as a strategic weapon and villages were burnt down when the inhabitants put up resistance or even if they refused to provide food or information.⁸⁶ Eventually the war was won in 1830 and this firmly established Dutch authority over Java. From 1830 onwards the colonial army would officially become independent under authority of the minister of Colonies and would in 1836 get the name *Nederlandsch Indisch Leger* (Netherlands Indies Army) (NIL). While the name KNIL only became in use in the 1930's with the 'K' standing for '*Koninklijk*' (Royal).⁸⁷

Next the Dutch incorporated most of Sumatra except for the most northern part, the strictly Islamic sultanate of Aceh. Only after a new Sumatra Treaty was signed with the

⁸² M.C. Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia since c. 1200* (New York 2008, fourth edition), 171.

⁸³ H. Streets-Salter, H. and T.R. Getz, *Empires and colonies in the modern world. A global perspective* (Oxford 2016) 306.

⁸⁴ Groen, 'Colonial warfare', 280.

⁸⁵ Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen*, 334.

⁸⁶ Groen, 'Colonial warfare', 280.

⁸⁷ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 45.

British in November 1871 the Dutch also tried to conquer the Acehnese territories.⁸⁸ The Aceh-war (1873-1904) turned out to be the most violent and protracted conflict of the ‘pacification’ of the archipelago. During this war, which consists of multiple phases of confrontations, it is estimated that more than 100.000 Acehnese died.⁸⁹ Although Dutch strategy and tactics varied during the different phases ‘scorched earth tactics’; large scale destruction of property and environmental warfare against the Acehnese population, were usually part of the colonial power’s military strategy. These practices did lead to internal criticism and debate throughout the war, but in practice the perception that it was a necessity to punish the resistant population usually prevailed.⁹⁰ At the start of the twentieth century during the ‘ethical period’, when European powers had also just codified the laws of war, the practice of burning *kampongs* came under more scrutiny. In the first half of the twentieth century this would lead to an army manual and other prohibitions on the use of arson that were still in force during the war of decolonization.

During the first two campaigns in 1873 and 1874 the main objective of the Dutch was to conquer the *kraton* (palace) of the sultan. During these first campaigns Dutch tactics were still ‘European’; involving a large combined force consisting of cavalry and infantry assisted by the navy.⁹¹ The Dutch conquered the palace in 1874, under lieutenant-general J. van Swieten (1807-1888). The young sultan died of cholera soon after. However, this did not stop the resistance, as the sultan had not been as powerful a central figure as his predecessors, instead Acehnese authority was decentralized with many independent and sometimes rivalling leaders.⁹²

⁸⁸ A.J.S Reid, *The contest for North Sumatra: Atjeh, the Netherlands and Britain 1858-1898* (Oxford 1969) 68-73.

⁸⁹ H. Schulte Nordholt, ‘A genealogy of violence’, in: F. Colombijn and J. T. Lindblad (eds.), *Roots of violence in Indonesia. Contemporary violence in historical perspective* (Leiden 2002) 33-63 there 36.

⁹⁰ Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen*, 304; Groen, ‘Colonial warfare’, 285.; Harmanny, ‘Voorbeeldloze tuchtiging’, 16.

⁹¹ Moor, de, *Westerling’s Oorlog*, 50

⁹² Kreike, ‘Genocide’, 300.

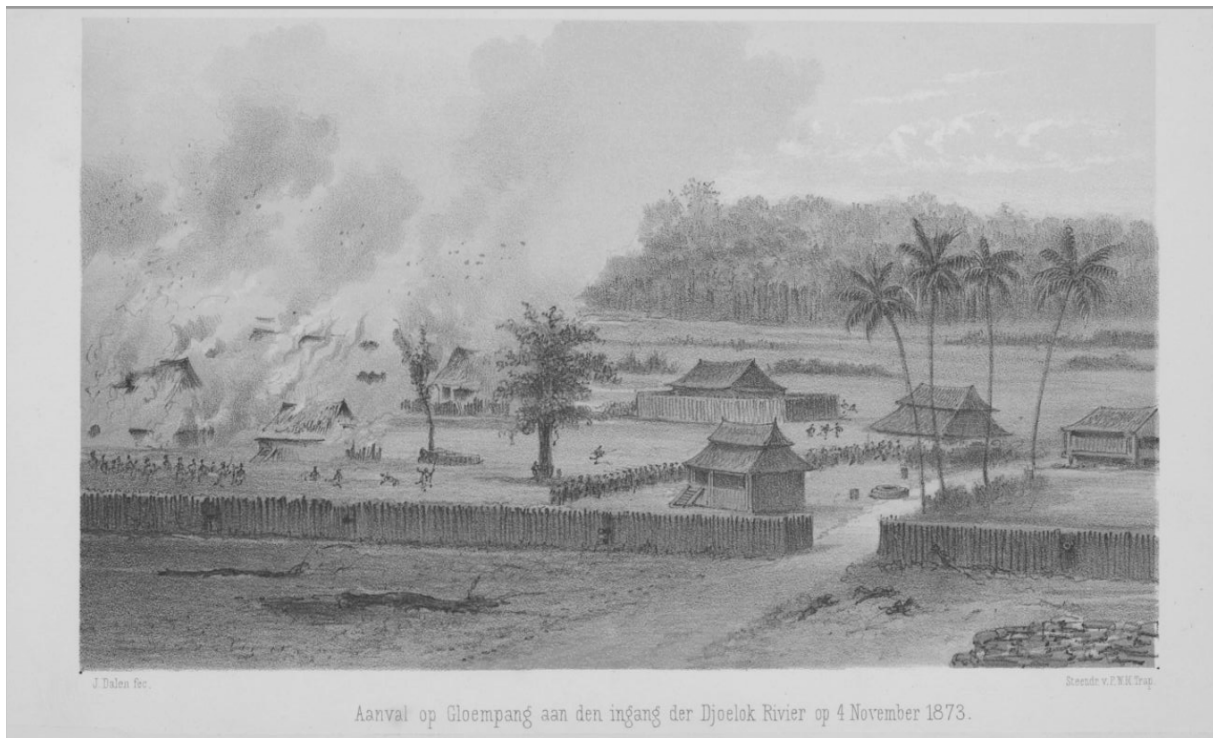


Image 1 'Houses on fire during an attack on Gloempang at the entrance of the Djeloek River on 4 November 1873'. Illustration: J. Dalen fecit, lithograph by P.W.M. Trap, in J.A. Kruijt, *Twee jaren blockade op Sumatra's Noord-Oost-Kust* (Leiden 1877).⁹³

Ongoing resistance throughout the 1870's would lead to the campaigns of general-major Karel van der Heijden (1826-1900) which from July 1878 to September 1879 amounted to unparalleled destruction in the valley of the river Aceh. Governor-general J.W. van Lansberge (r.1875-1881) had ordered a campaign of '*voorbeeldloze tuchtiging*' (unparalleled punishment) which was aimed as much at the population as it was at enemy troops.⁹⁴ During this scorched earth campaign all villages were burned down of which the inhabitants appeared to support the rebels, fired on Dutch supply columns or refused to surrender. According to Dutch historian Azarja Harmanny burning down the houses was just the simplest and most effective way of economic warfare aimed at the livelihood of the population. Because of the abundance of wood, the wooden pile-houses could be relatively easily rebuilt thus Van der Heijden also let his men destroy all other means of existence to impair them in the long run. Van der Heijden had 51 kampongs punished, which according to Harmanny was about one third of the total amount of kampongs in the XXII *Moekim*, that comprised one third of Greater-Aceh. Based on the military daily-journals by Van der Heijden Harmanny counted the

⁹³ Via: Harmanny, 'Voorbeeldloze tuchtiging', 19.

⁹⁴ Groen, 'Colonial warfare', 285.

amount of houses burned as 815, but recognizes that because of incomplete reporting this could be many times more.⁹⁵

Different tactics that included burning, starvation, razing and a 'defensive line' were tried in the 1880's and 1890s's.⁹⁶ From 1893 onwards a new strategy developed which involved recruiting and arming Acehnese allies to do the fighting.⁹⁷ This backfired when in 1896 Acehnese warlord *teuku* Umar betrayed the Dutch right after he had received large quantities of arms, opium and silver coins. Again the Dutch decided to retaliate with strength. In 1896 and 1897 general-major J.A. Vetter severely '*tuchtigde*' (punished) the valley of Aceh Besar and burned down multiple villages.⁹⁸ In this period the destruction was much more selective and at the same time more brutal; less villages were punished but those that were received a more brutal and thorough treatment, which was meant to serve as an example for the rest of the population. The villages were 'razed' to the ground which means that the Dutch destroyed every house, tree or grave so that nothing was left standing while sometimes simultaneously exterminating the entire population, including women and children. The destruction caused tens of thousands Acehnese to flee to other territories.⁹⁹

In 1898 a new offensive campaign was started led by J.B. van Heutsz (1851-1924) the new governor of Aceh. Van Heutsz now criticised the earlier destructive tactics, because it turned the population further against them and would make them more determined in their resistance.¹⁰⁰ The new governor had made a fast rise through the ranks during the Aceh-war and in 1898 he was promoted to general-major and civil and military governor of Aceh. Policy was now dictated by him and orientalist Christian Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) who acted as a government adviser in Islamic matters. Van Heutsz finally conquered Aceh with a series of campaigns between 1898 and 1904. He developed a 'counterguerrilla' doctrine that relied on separating 'the good from the bad'. This doctrine has been described as 'surgical violence'; resistance fighters were 'restlessly pursued' while the Dutch relied on intelligence from the population. This meant that the cooperation of the population was of utmost importance, and therefore they should be treated humane and not be the victim of brutal and unnecessary violence. For these pursuits the *Korps Marechaussee* became the leading special forces unit in the KNIL. It was founded in 1890 and from 1895 onwards became a

⁹⁵ Harmanny, 'Voorbeeldloze tuchtiging', 15, 19.

⁹⁶ For more details see for instance Kreike, 'Genocide', 304-310.

⁹⁷ Groen, 'Colonial warfare', 286.

⁹⁸ Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen*, 468.

⁹⁹ Kreike, 'Genocide', 299.

¹⁰⁰ Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen*, 468.

‘counterguerrilla’ force that worked in small units, which are much more suited to give chase to guerrilla fighters than larger army units.¹⁰¹ It consisted exclusively of indigenous soldiers under command of European officers.¹⁰² The KNIL, with an important role for the *Korps Marechaussee*, systematically subjugated all Acehnese territories, and local leaders were forced to sign a contract by which they acknowledged Dutch authority. Introduced in 1898 by Snouck Hurgronje this *Korte Verklaring* (Short Declaration) would become the standard contract all indigenous rulers in the Dutch East Indies had to sign in those territories where the Dutch used ‘indirect rule’.¹⁰³

In 1902 Van Heutsz wrote instructions for his subordinates in Aceh, in which one point explicitly dealt with the burning of civilian property:

‘24. The burning of *kampongs*, place of worship and houses that belong to the population is strictly forbidden. Even during military excursions in areas that are abandoned, it is only allowed to burn down temporary habitation by gang leaders and their gangs.’¹⁰⁴

This was the theory but in practice under Van Heutsz the Dutch were still acting in brutal fashion towards the Acehnese population. This was one of the reasons why in 1903 Snouck-Hurgronje distanced himself from Van Heutsz. The expedition of lieutenant-colonel van Daalen in the Gajo and Alas lands in 1904 was perhaps the most brutal culmination of *Marechaussee* tactics. This was one of the last resisting areas in Aceh and almost 3000 men, women and children were murdered by an expeditionary force of 250 men armed with carbines and *klewangs* (short sabres).¹⁰⁵ Although the resistance in Aceh occasionally flared up, this is often considered the end of the war. Van Heutsz career progressed nonetheless and he named Van Daalen governor of Aceh while he went on to become governor-general (r. 1904-1909) himself. During this period the Dutch established their rule over all territories not yet under their control with force. The *Korps Marechaussee* played an important part in these conquests by pursuing and killing anyone that resisted.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Groen, ‘Colonial warfare’, 287.

¹⁰² Moor, de, *Westerling’s Oorlog*, 53, 54.

¹⁰³ Ricklefs, *Indonesia*, 178.

¹⁰⁴ Heuts. J.B., van, ‘Instructie voor de Onderafdeelingen-chefs in de Onderhoorigheden van Atjeh’, *Indisch Militair Tijdschrift* 34:1 (1903) 253-266 there 258.

¹⁰⁵ Groen, ‘Colonial warfare’, 289.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, 290.

The laws of war and the VPTL

In the same period in The Hague, the Netherlands two peace conferences (1899, 1907) took place during which the International Laws of War were codified by European powers.¹⁰⁷ The following article, which was agreed on during the 1899 convention, concerns property destruction:

‘Section II, Chapter 1, Art 23: In addition to the prohibitions provided by special Conventions, it is especially forbidden (g): To destroy or seize the enemy's property, unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of war.’¹⁰⁸

The legal clause ends with the ‘necessities of war’ also known as ‘military necessity’, which means that when military logic demands that a specific situation ‘forces’ a commander to ignore the laws of war, this is permitted.¹⁰⁹ Whether commanders or politicians feel forced to ignore the laws of war often completely hinges on their own judgement, which makes military necessity a very subjective concept.¹¹⁰ The Hague Conventions were entirely premised on war between states, and therefore imperial powers argued that they were not applicable in a colonial context.¹¹¹ Especially as the military did not consider ‘pacification’ as actual war, and lay the blame for not abiding the laws of war on the side of the uncivilized opponent who had no military honour.¹¹² The laws of war were not considered suitable for wars against ‘uncivilized people’, like in the colonies where it often was impossible to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants.¹¹³ In *jus in bello* this distinction between the treatment of combatants and non-combatants was an important part of modern military thinking and practice. However, non-combatants had obligations as well as rights, as they could not partake

¹⁰⁷ A. Roberts, A., ‘Land warfare: From Hague to Nuremberg’, in: Howard, M., G. J. Andreopoulos, M.R. Shulman eds., *The laws of war: constraints on warfare in the Western world* (New Haven 1994) 116-139 there 116.

¹⁰⁸ The Hague Convention 1907, *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*. The Hague, 18 October 1907. *Annex to the Convention: Regulations respecting the laws and customs of war on land - Section II : Hostilities - Chapter I: Means of injuring the enemy, sieges, and bombardments - Regulations: Art. 23*. Via ICRC: <<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/195>> visited on 02-10-2019.

¹⁰⁹ Walter, *Colonial violence*, 63.

¹¹⁰ Kennedy, P. and G. J. Andreopoulos, ‘The laws of war: some concluding reflections’, in: *The laws of war: constraints on warfare in the Western world* (New Haven 1994) 214-225 there 218.

¹¹¹ Walter, *Colonial violence*, 79.

¹¹² Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 46.

¹¹³ Groen, ‘Colonial warfare’, 288.

in hostilities otherwise this led to automatic loss of immunity. Therefore from a European officer's point of view, a guerrilla war was an inherently difficult situation because the opponent often could not be distinguished from the local population. This interpretation specifically allowed violence against the second group that Europeans traditionally excluded from their 'gentlemanly' way of warfare: alien people. Only people with similar cultural traditions had the right to be treated with restraint during warfare.¹¹⁴

According to Dutch historian Petra Groen the Dutch did in theory make an effort to adapt the laws of war for use in the colonies. This was done primarily because the Dutch had a strong interest in upholding the laws of war due to their own position as a small nation in Europe, but also to cause less resentment and bitterness among the indigenous population of the colonies.¹¹⁵ This was in line with the 'ethical policy' that became the primary legitimization of Dutch colonialism at the start of the twentieth century, although the laws of war were in practice often ignored. The establishment of a civilized and modern state, where the colony would be Westernized under Dutch guidance, was seen as a moral obligation by many.¹¹⁶ By 1910 the 'pacification' was almost completed and afterwards Dutch authority in the archipelago would remain practically uncontested until the Japanese invasion in 1942. Keeping public order was mainly left to the police force, which numbered around 35.000. The KNIL, still 32.000 strong in 1930, mostly served as a means to remind the people of what the Dutch were capable of. The KNIL only acted on a substantial scale during the communist rebellions in 1926 and 1927 on Java and Sumatra.¹¹⁷

A colonial military doctrine was first created and published in 1928, in an army manual called *Voorschrift voor de uitoefening van de politiek-politionele taak van het leger* (Manual for the exercise of the political-police task of the army) (VPTL). Dutch historian Jaap de Moor calls it: 'a manual for counter-insurgency when put into modern terms'. The methods it contains on restoring 'peace and order' are based on actions by the *Korps Marechaussee* during the last decade of the Aceh-war.¹¹⁸ Van Doorn & Hendrix call it a 'humanised and systemized version of the Aceh-formula', a combination of military expertise and careful behaviour standards for policing.¹¹⁹ It also contains some points on how to treat 'the population in general', of which one specifically speaks about arson:

¹¹⁴ Kennedy and Andreopoulos, 'Laws of war', 215.

¹¹⁵ Groen, 'Colonial warfare', 288.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, 286.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, 291, 294.

¹¹⁸ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 54.

¹¹⁹ Doorn, van and Hendrix, *Ontsporing*, 165.

‘16 (2): The destruction of the means of existence and the burning and destroying of possessions can only lead to embitterment with the opposing party; therefore such acts are strictly prohibited.’¹²⁰

Although probably at least partially motivated by humanitarian reasons, the practical argument of trying to avert rancour among the opponent is still clearly present. In the same section it is also noted that holy places, places of historical significance and places with ‘cultural value’ were to be spared unless they were defended by armed opponents.¹²¹ After 1928 there were no more serious revolts, so the VPTL was never put to the test. In 1945 a new version of the VPTL was issued by general Spoor to his troops, although it contained few changes from the previous iteration. The article that prohibited the use of fire against civilian property was still in use during the Dutch-Indonesian war.¹²² Due to the two world wars there had also been no more peace conferences that dealt with the protection of civilians since The Hague 1907. The second The Hague Convention would only be supplemented by the Fourth Geneva Convention, on August 12, 1949, one day after the Dutch-Indonesian truce of August 10-11, 1949.¹²³ Before returning to additional laws and orders that were intended to serve as restraints on arson during the war of decolonization, first the war of 1945-1949 will be more extensively discussed.

¹²⁰ *Voorschrift voor de uitoefening van de politiek-politionele taak van het leger (VPTL) (herdruk uitgave KNIL) (Utrecht 1945)*, Chef van den Generalen staf, 27.

¹²¹ *Ibidem*.

¹²² Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 435.; Groen, ‘Colonial warfare’, 291.

¹²³ Since 1864 there had also been three Geneva Conventions but these intended to protect wounded or captured military personnel, only the fourth was meant to protect civilians from violence during wars. This was the first convention that included conflicts within states, while the earlier conventions (like the The Hague conventions) were officially only applicable for conflicts between states. Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 28.

The Dutch-Indonesian war 1945-1949

Before the Japanese invasion in 1942 the Dutch had ruled practically uncontested over the Dutch East Indies where they had been present for over three centuries. The much stronger Japanese rapidly defeated the Dutch colonial forces and incarcerated the European population including the troops of the KNIL in prison camps under dire conditions. They occupied the islands for over three years, and after the American bombings of Hiroshima the Japanese capitulated on 15 August 1945 and confined themselves to encampments throughout the archipelago. Two days later on August 17 1945 Indonesian nationalist leaders Soekarno (1901-1970) and Mohammed Hatta (1902-1980) declared independence for the Republic of Indonesia. The Dutch were eager to regain their former colony, notwithstanding the Indonesian declaration of independence.¹²⁴ Although they spoke of pacification and a rebuilding mission, their motivations were largely economic and geopolitical mixed with paternalistic ideas of a very gradual road towards Indonesian independence under Dutch ‘guidance’.¹²⁵



Map 1 Indonesia 1945-1950.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ R. Frakking, R., “Gathered on the point of a bayonet”: The Negara Pasundan and the colonial defence of Indonesia, 1946-50’, *The International History Review*, 39:1 (2017) 30-47 there 32.

¹²⁵ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 18.

¹²⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 64-65.

Since at this point the Dutch barely had any military presence in Indonesia, on Java the task to accept Japanese surrender and to maintain security afterwards was assigned to British troops of the Allied South East Asia Command (SEAC).¹²⁷ Soon after the declaration of Indonesian independence the *Bersiap*¹²⁸ phase of the Indonesian Revolution started. During this violent uprising Indonesian armed *pemoeda*'s (youth groups) and *Heiho*'s (Japanese auxiliary soldiers) trained by the Japanese and other Indonesians violently objected against Dutch return. This led to outbursts of violence against Europeans and the Eurasians and Chinese that were associated with colonial rule.¹²⁹ Although the British only occupied key areas they did not succeed in maintaining order and also became involved in the fighting.¹³⁰

All of this led to a bellicose atmosphere in the Netherlands, that had only just been freed from German occupation and regarded Indonesia as economically essential for the rebuilding of the country.¹³¹ The first group of Dutch soldiers from the *Koninklijke Landmacht* (Royal Army) (KL) that were sent to Indonesia were volunteers, who were initially recruited to liberate the colony from the fascist Japanese.¹³² This first group of Dutch soldiers would amount to 25.000 men in the KL. When enthusiasm diminished because of the changed situation in 1946 the Dutch government started the recruitment for what would eventually lead to the deployment of 95.000 KL conscript soldiers.¹³³ In September 1946 the first Division of these men departed for Indonesia, while the constitution was only changed later, on August 4 1947, to make forced deployment in the colonies legally possible.¹³⁴ By the end of 1946 the KNIL was rebuilt to about 37.000 strong composed of former POW's and newly recruited Indonesian volunteers under European officers. The KNIL would have a peak strength of around 60.000 in 1948, and in total between 77.000-80.000 men served in its ranks during this war. While there also served around 20.000 men in the *Koninklijke Marine* (Royal Navy) (KM). Combined the Dutch armed forces reached its peak strength of around 150.000

¹²⁷ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 129.

¹²⁸ *Bersiap* means 'Get Ready' or 'Be Alert'.

¹²⁹ G.R. Knight, 'Death in Slawi: The "sugar factory murders", ethnicity, conflicted loyalties and the context of violence in the early revolution in Indonesia, October 1945', *Itinerario* 41:3 (2017) 606-626 there 607.

¹³⁰ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 20

¹³¹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 53.

¹³² P. Romijn, 'Learning on "the job": Dutch war volunteers entering the Indonesian war of Independence, 1945-1946', *Journal of Genocide Research* 13:3-4 (2012) 317-336 there 319.

¹³³ In various publications on the war different Dutch troop strengths are provided. Therefore I have followed Oostindie, *Soldaat*. which was published in 2014 and the additional archival research that was done especially for this book by the KITLV to specify the numbers: < <https://www.kitlv.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/C.H.C.-Harinck-J.-Verwey-Wie-kwamen-wie-zagen-wie-schreven-voor-de-KITLV-website.pdf>.> visited on 22-11-2019; Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 22-24.

¹³⁴ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 88.

in the first half of 1948, when in total around 220.000 men would serve over the course of the war.¹³⁵ In addition it must be noted that the largest part of the armed forces was only briefly or indirectly involved in active warfare. It has been estimated by historian Oostindie that only around 25 percent of all Dutch military personnel in Indonesia was active ‘in the field’ while around 75 percent carried out supporting functions.¹³⁶

In October 1945 the highest Dutch authority in Indonesia lieutenant-governor-general Hubertus van Mook (1894-1965) had arrived in Batavia (Jakarta), and at the start of 1946 former intelligence officer Simon Spoor (1902-1949) was appointed as the new army commander.¹³⁷ Van Mook developed federal plans as a counterweight to the Indonesian Republic. The federal structure was designed to isolate and weaken the Republic as one of many federal states, while the other states would be led by local elites that were loyal to the Dutch.¹³⁸ The federal states that were established this way over the course of the war are often called ‘puppet states’ because of their dependence on Dutch military backing and the protection of Dutch interests they provided.¹³⁹

At the end of 1946 the British troops left. Under international pressure negotiations had started and on 15 November 1946 the ‘Linggadjati-agreement’ was reached. The Netherlands would recognize de facto authority of the Republic over parts of Java, Madoera and Sumatra and both parties would work together founding the United States of Indonesia according to Van Mook’s federal plans.¹⁴⁰ On December 24th the first federal state of East-Indonesia (*Negara Indonesia Timoer*), with Makassar, Zuid-Celebes¹⁴¹ (South-Sulawesi) as its projected capital, was created during a conference in Den Pasar, Bali.¹⁴²

The Linggadjati-agreement failed, largely because of additional demands from the Dutch government in The Hague.¹⁴³ The Dutch then decided to push for a decisive military effort and ‘*Operatie Product*’ was launched. It was aimed at the largest Republican strongholds on Java and Sumatra and the recovery of economically important targets.¹⁴⁴ The

¹³⁵ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 22-24.; < <https://www.kitlv.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/C.H.C.-Harinck-J.-Verwey-Wie-kwamen-wie-zagen-wie-schreven-voor-de-KITLV-website.pdf>.> visited on 22-11-2019.

¹³⁶ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 153.

¹³⁷ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 22.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 54.

¹³⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 53.

¹³⁹ E. Buettner, *Europe after empire: decolonization, society, and culture* (Cambridge 2016) 95.

¹⁴⁰ W. IJzereef, *De Zuid-Celebes affaire. Kapitein Westerling en de standrechtelijke executies* (Dieren 1984) 14.

¹⁴¹ I have opted to use the Dutch Zuid-Celebes throughout the chapter instead of ‘half’ translating it to South-Celebes.

¹⁴² IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 15.

¹⁴³ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 24.

¹⁴⁴ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 54, 61.

action started on 21 July 1947 and was cut short on the 5th August on orders from the Dutch government that was under significant international pressure, especially from the United States, to stop the action. Two-thirds of Java and parts of Sumatra were conquered during what was later euphemistically called the first ‘Police Action’.¹⁴⁵ Although large territorial gains were made the Republican forces the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI), largely escaped and immediately resorted to large-scale guerrilla warfare. Next to the TNI all sorts of other militias and irregular groups fought against the Dutch, but also among each other for local influence. For the Dutch the territories that had to be controlled now were far too large, their troops were spread thin and quickly got overburdened.¹⁴⁶ The Dutch struggled against an elusive opponent but general Spoor kept underestimating the opposition because they were often badly armed and no match during direct confrontations. Army command did not develop a fitting counter-guerrilla doctrine nor a convincing ‘hearts and minds’ campaign to win the population to the Dutch side.¹⁴⁷ The Dutch discarded the guerrilla methods of the opponent as foul and unfair, in part because the opponent hardly wore uniforms and hid among the population. In pursuit of their elusive enemy the Dutch resorted to methods like, executions, torture, arson during patrols, punitive measures and intelligence operations.¹⁴⁸

On 17 January 1948 the ‘Renville-agreement’ was reached through United Nations (UN) mediation. It was very similar to the Linggadjati-agreement and contained a truce that divided Java. Republican troops retreated from West-Java, but after several months of relative quiet the guerrilla war flared up again.¹⁴⁹ In September 1948 the Republic struck down a communist rebellion in the East-Javanese city of Madioen, this lend them a lot of ‘Cold War credibility’ in American eyes which would lead to more diplomatic pressure on the Dutch.¹⁵⁰ At the end of 1948 Van Mook was replaced by former prime-minister Louis Beel (1902-1977) as the highest Dutch authority in Indonesia under the new title *Hoge Vertegenwoordiger van de Kroon* (High Representative of the Crown) (HVK).¹⁵¹ In the hope to destroy the Republic the Dutch launched their second large offensive, known as the second ‘Police Action’ on 19 December 1948. The United States quickly condemned the action and withdrew Marshall Plan aid meant for the campaign in Indonesia. On 5 January the Dutch again cut the action

¹⁴⁵ Brocades Zaalberg, ‘Civil and military’, 68.

¹⁴⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 55.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem, 54.

¹⁴⁸ Frakking, ‘Bayonet’, 35.

¹⁴⁹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 56.; Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 25.

¹⁵⁰ Brocades Zaalberg, ‘Civil and military’, 79

¹⁵¹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 56.

short because they feared Marshall aid for the Netherlands could also be withdrawn.¹⁵² Trying to decapitate the opponent they had swiftly captured the Republican capital of Djokjakarta by air and arrested the political leaders, however, TNI leadership and most troops escaped.¹⁵³

While the Dutch now occupied the whole of Java and large parts of Sumatra, the TNI started a carefully planned guerrilla offensive. Both on Java and Sumatra the Dutch had to control even vaster territories, while it is estimated that the TNI was 175.000 strong and there were around the same amount of other irregular forces.¹⁵⁴ In addition the Republican shadow governments on Java often proved to be more effective in controlling the population than the Dutch attempts at governance.¹⁵⁵ Over the course of the war around 5.000 Dutch military personnel died while on the Indonesian side it is usually estimated that over a 100.000 died, although there also estimates that this could have been up to 150.000 Indonesians that were killed.¹⁵⁶ On both sides about half of the deaths were in the last phase of the war between January and August 1949.¹⁵⁷ It is also estimated that as a consequence of the war around seven million people were displaced on Java and Sumatra, which is almost 10 percent of the population of approximately 72 million inhabitants for the entire archipelago.¹⁵⁸ Under diplomatic pressure and the growing realization that the war was impossible to win, negotiations throughout 1949 led to an official transfer of sovereignty on 27 December 1949 to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (VSI).¹⁵⁹

Restraints on arson during the Dutch-Indonesian war 1945-1949

In addition to the (limited) influence of the laws of war and the army manual, the VPTL, other orders and laws were issued that were supposed to serve as a restraint on arson during the war of decolonization. In February 1948 the Minister for Overseas Territories Jonkman asked Spoor to provide him with materials which proved army command had taken sufficient measures to make the troops aware they should take utmost care when it came to the lives and property of the Indonesian population. In response Spoor sent a whole package of measures to

¹⁵² Buettner, *Europe*, 95.

¹⁵³ Brocades Zaalberg, 'Civil and military', 68.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁵ Ibidem, 81.

¹⁵⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 57.; Oostindie, Hoogenboom and Verwey, 'Decolonization', 257.

¹⁵⁷ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 57.

¹⁵⁸ A. Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (New York 2005) 100.

¹⁵⁹ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 25.

Van Mook to relay to the minister.¹⁶⁰ It included a defensive letter of sixteen points accompanied with instructions to his commanders and *Dagorders* (Daily orders) with general guidelines for his troops. *Dagorders* were read out to the troops by their commanders when they stood at attention. According to Spoor these contained his expectation that their actions were of a high civilized and humanitarian level.¹⁶¹ However, according to these orders sent to the minister property destruction was specifically forbidden only once. This was at the start of the first ‘Police Action’ on 21 July 1947:

‘Behave yourself in the *dessa*’s [rural municipality] and the houses of the population, were your military task brings you, as the harbinger of justice and safety (...) Respect homes and property of the population. Do not unnecessarily destroy anything.’¹⁶²

There were other calls to respect the property of the population but these address plunder and theft rather than destruction.¹⁶³ In a later order, at the start of the second ‘Police Action’, on December 18 1948, Spoor wrote: ‘be decisive but also humane and spare other people’s property.’¹⁶⁴ In March 1949 the general received complaints about the conduct of his soldiers. He dismissed most complaints as politically motivated or rumours that were largely exaggerated and contained little truth. However, he believed that sometimes intolerable conduct did take place and therefore he again pointed to the military code of honour in a *Dagorder*, that amongst other codes of conduct read: ‘spare other people’s possessions at all times, unless military action demands unavoidable measures.’¹⁶⁵

According to historian Oostindie these orders show that army command did not allow war crimes, but explicitly forbade them. Based on the diaries he investigated a contradictory image of the chain of command comes forth, but he deems it likely that lower commanders had a lot of freedom to act. While he also notes that prevention and sanctions for war crimes were of ‘low priority’. He calls this a disturbing conclusion that has also been drawn by other

¹⁶⁰ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Algemene Secretarie van de Nederlands-Indische Regering en de daarbij gedeponeerde Archieven, nummer toegang 2.10.14, inventarisnummer 3769: ‘Dagorders en aanschrijvingen van de legercommandant’, 1946-1948, ‘Spoor aan van Mook’, Batavia, 16-2-1948.

¹⁶¹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 601.

¹⁶² NA, AS 3769, NA, AS 3769, ‘Dagorders’, Wapenbroeder!, 21-7-1947.

¹⁶³ NA, AS 3769, ‘Dagorders’, ‘Bescherming van anderer eigendommen’, 13-10-1947. ; NA, AS 3769, ‘Dagorders’, ‘Bescherming van anderer eigendommen’, 17-11-1947.

¹⁶⁴ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 170: ‘Dagorders van het kabinet van de legercommandant’, 1946 -1950, ‘Dagorder’, 18-12-1948.

¹⁶⁵ NA, SNI 170, ‘Dagorders’, ‘Dagorder’, 24-3-1949.

historians.¹⁶⁶ Indeed Dutch historian Peter Romijn observes that in practice such orders by Spoor were almost never enforced by repressive measures.¹⁶⁷ While Limpach also argues that the fact that Spoor provided *Dagorders* and other instructions as his most important preventive measures suggest a certain powerlessness and can be explained as a recognition of failing policy. The Dutch troops had to cover large areas with small units, and army command never set up any control systems, nor did Spoor impose disciplinary or judicial consequences to his orders.¹⁶⁸ This also leads him to conclude that it is likely that headquarters were unwilling to consistently punish perpetrators.¹⁶⁹ This only emphasises why it is so important to thoroughly study one of the only cases of arson that did lead to an internal investigation, which this thesis shall return to in chapter 4.

Another set of regulations which could be regarded as an authorisation for transgressions by the military, but also as a form of restraint is the ‘State of War and Siege’ (*Staat van Oorlog en Beleg*) (SOB).¹⁷⁰ Higher civil and military authorities and especially Spoor were well aware of these laws. As a major of the General Staff in Melbourne, Australia during the Second World War, Spoor had written an extensive manual about it for the training of civil servants.¹⁷¹ On the 10th of May 1940 when Germany invaded The Netherlands in the Dutch East Indies a ‘State of Siege’ (*Staat van Beleg*) was proclaimed.¹⁷² This meant that there would be a supremacy of the military authority over the civil service, and the authorities could infringe, change and discard existing laws.¹⁷³ On most places on Java, Sumatra and other islands this Stage of Siege was not lifted and remained in effect during the course of the war of decolonization.¹⁷⁴ This meant the military authorities predominantly operated under

¹⁶⁶ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 11.

¹⁶⁷ P. Romijn, ‘Learning on “the job”’: Dutch war volunteers entering the Indonesian war of Independence, 1945-1946’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 13:3-4 (2012) 317-336 there 331.

¹⁶⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 604.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 754.

¹⁷⁰ Both the ‘State of War’ and the ‘State of Siege’ meant that the military was recognized as the highest authority. There was, however, a gradual difference between the two, with the state of emergency, and thus the jurisdiction of the military, being highest under the ‘State of Siege’ while both fell under the SOB.

Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, KITLV-inventaris 126, Collectie Locher, S.H. Spoor Majoor Van den Generalen Staf K.N.I.L., ‘De “Staat van oorlog en beleg in Nederlandsch-Indië.”, Opleiding van bestuursambtenaren voor Nederlandsch-Indië, Melbourne 1943/44’, 4.

¹⁷¹ UB, KITLV 126: ‘SOB’.

¹⁷² G.C. Zijlmans, *Eindstrijd en ondergang van de Indische Bestuursdienst. Het corps binnenlands bestuur op Java 1945-1950* (Amsterdam 1985) 168.

¹⁷³ UB, KITLV 126: ‘SOB’, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Remco Raben, ‘Zonder vorm van proces’, *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, 26 september 2014.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 59.

the rules of the SOB during the course of the 1945-1949 war.¹⁷⁵ According to the SOB they could impose censorship, preventively intern opponents, demand labour and establish special military tribunals, while all public political meetings were outlawed.¹⁷⁶ Under Article 13 it also gave the military jurisdiction to claim the use of, or occupy all assets and realty. Article 13.6 specifically mentions the destruction of property:

‘The use of any realty also includes the jurisdiction to change its condition, clear away, make unclear or destroy everything that interferes with the execution of military measures’.¹⁷⁷

Thus notwithstanding what was written in the *Dagorders* and the VPTL it was not illegal according to Dutch colonial laws during the 1945-1949 war to destroy property when it interfered with the execution of military measures under the SOB. Whether ‘the execution of military measures’ also included deprivation of shelter or punitive measures remains questionable. However, this law might have provided an excuse not to prosecute in case of arson. Furthermore it is interesting that Article 13.8 reads that the military authorities should pay compensation for occupation or ‘use’, which includes destruction according to 13.6.¹⁷⁸ Having to pay compensation can of course also serve as a restraint if this article was invoked, whether this was ever the case will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Regeling op de Staat van Oorlog en Beleg’, *Staatsblad voor Nederlands-Indië* 582 (1939).

¹⁷⁶ UB, KITLV 126: ‘SOB’, 4.

¹⁷⁷ ‘SOB’, Artikel 13: ‘*Het gebruik van eenig vast goed omvat de bevoegdheid tot wijziging van de gesteldheid daarvan en tot wegruiming, onbruikbaarmaking of vernietiging van alles wat aan de uitvoering van militaire maatregelen in de weg staat.*’

¹⁷⁸ ‘SOB’, Artikel 13.8.

Conclusion

During their conquest of the Indonesian archipelago the Dutch often used fire as a weapon. The principal motivation was to collectively punish the population for resisting, or for harbouring and supporting an opponent that resisted the Dutch army. During the Aceh-war there were even large ‘scorched earth’ campaigns that were directed at all means of livelihood of the population. Fire was used to cause deprivation, fear and hunger among the population, meant to illustrate that it was unwise to oppose Dutch supremacy. Although it was recognized that burning could lead to embitterment among the population which could prolong their resistance, this argument usually did not in reality prevent the use of fire. During the ‘ethical period’ and the simultaneous codification of the laws of war, humane reasons for safeguarding the civilian population and their possessions were also considered. During the last phase of the Aceh war burning was even explicitly forbidden by governor Van Heutsz because they needed the cooperation of the people, however, the Dutch actions against those that resisted remained extremely harsh.

Many Europeans considered the European laws of war to not be applicable to conflict in the Dutch East Indies and other European colonies. This both due to the difficulty in distinguishing combatants from non-combatants in a guerrilla war, and because the opponent was seen as ‘alien’ and ‘uncivilized’. Nevertheless the laws of war influenced some of the theoretical restraints in the Dutch East Indies. In combination with the experiences from the last phase of the Aceh-war this did lead to an army manual in 1928, the VPTL, that among others forbade the burning and destruction of possessions of ‘the population in general’. Because of the relative quiet in the Dutch East Indies until the Japanese invasion in 1942, this manual was never truly put to the test as a restraint. During the Dutch-Indonesian war, together with *Dagorders* by general Spoor, the VPTL was applied in an attempt to positively influence the behaviour of the Dutch troops towards the Indonesian population. Yet Spoor seldomly imposed disciplinary or judicial consequences as a result of troops breaking the code of conduct set out in the VTPL or other prohibitions. Taking this into account it is highly unlikely that direct orders for burning and destruction came from Spoor and his staff, but perhaps more is to be found with field officers¹⁷⁹ that also had a more direct influence on their subordinates in the field.

¹⁷⁹ Dutch: *hoofdofficier*, major, lieutenant-colonel, colonel.

Chapter 2 Arson during the ‘Zuid-Celebes affair’ (1946-1947)

On October 1st 2019 the Dutch *Gerechtshof* (Court of Justice), the first court of appeal, ruled that a former fighter named Yaseman, who was tortured by Dutch troops in Zuid-Celebes, and bereaved family-members of people that were executed can still claim monetary compensation from the Dutch state for these events that occurred over 70 years prior. According to the court due to the graveness of these acts and the culpability of the Dutch state the statute of limitations does not apply.¹⁸⁰

In the second half of 1946 the Dutch lost control of the situation in Zuid-Celebes due to heavy resistance towards their return.¹⁸¹ At the time Batavia was not able to send large amounts of troops to reinforce the KNIL in Zuid-Celebes, so Dutch army leadership sent a newly formed commando unit called the *Depot Speciale Troepen* (DST) under the command of captain R.P.P. Westerling (1919-1987). Westerling was ordered to ‘to purge Makassar and its surroundings and break the terror’.¹⁸² This meant Westerling could act on his own accord, and had no clearly outlined objectives aside from crushing the rebellion by any means he deemed fit.¹⁸³ Westerling immediately developed his own methods and between mid-December 1946 until the end of February 1947 his methods resulted in at least 3.500 Indonesian deaths, of whom many were killed through summary executions.¹⁸⁴ Next to the summary executions and other measures, the DST and KNIL also burned down many houses and kampongs during this period. Several historians have done research into what became known as the ‘Zuid-Celebes affair’, focussing their research mostly on the issue of summary executions. However they do note arson was a part of Westerling’s first action plans, but do not analyse this any further, nor do they investigate whether this was condoned by higher military authorities. Therefore, in line with the second part of the main research question, in this chapter it will be investigated to what extent arson by Dutch troops during the ‘Zuid-Celebes affair’ was part of the methods of the DST and KNIL, and whether this was authorized by Dutch military commanders. In accordance with the third part the motivations for arson will be treated.

¹⁸⁰ NRC <<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2019/10/01/hof-geweld-van-militairen-in-nederlands-indie-uit-1947-niet-verjaard-a3975179>> visited on 10-10-2019.

¹⁸¹ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 86-91.

¹⁸² Ibidem, 96.

¹⁸³ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 270.

¹⁸⁴ Ibidem, 247, 306, 308. These are the numbers from official Dutch documents, Limpach presumes this has to be increased with several thousands, especially because our lack of knowledge about the acts of the police, *kampong*-police, and militias that functioned as auxiliary troops.

The operational orders and patrol reports of the first four actions are the only available operational reports left of the actions of the DST.¹⁸⁵ Thus they are an important source to establish to what extent arson was part of the orders and actions. Many Dutch archives, reports and other papers concerning this case have been destroyed or disappeared while the Dutch also underreported atrocities.¹⁸⁶ For instance Limpach believes that several thousands of Indonesians casualties should be added to the number of 3.500 which has been established through Dutch archival records.¹⁸⁷ While Australian historian Adrian Vickers estimates that around 6.000 people were executed during the actions.¹⁸⁸ What information survives on later actions comes mainly from an internal investigation by the commission Van Rij en Stam, which was published in 1954 and then quickly disappeared into a drawer. Their report was based on an investigation-file by lieutenant-colonel J.L. Paardekooper (KNIL), who was named an extraordinary member of the High Military Court by Spoor and was tasked with the investigation in 1949. The file consists of extensive statements accumulated by Paardekooper and made under oath by eyewitnesses and individuals involved in the actions.¹⁸⁹ Next to what the most important officers involved said on arson in general during the interrogations, their statements on arson during one particular action in Madjene on February 1st 1947 will also feature in this chapter.

Several other historians have examined and written about these files, such as Willem IJzereef, Jaap de Moor and Rémy Limpach, whose works examine different facets of the actions. IJzereef extensively treats the local and political situation leading up to the events.¹⁹⁰ De Moor's book is about the DST and its development, so he also extensively writes about the commando's before and after the affair.¹⁹¹ Limpach has the most attention for the aftermath, the legal implications and the debates among the highest Dutch authorities concerning the summary executions.¹⁹² Another reason for the focus on the Zuid Celebes affair is due to the

¹⁸⁵ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 99.; Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 140.; In the personal archive of colonel De Vries the operational orders accompanied by concise action reports of the first four actions by the DST are to be found. colonel De Vries took his personal archive of several metres home after the war, after he passed away in 1976 it was donated to de *Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis* (today NIMH) by his relatives in 1979: Via:

<<https://www.archieven.nl/nl/zoeken?mivast=0&mizig=210&miad=2231&miaet=1&micode=237&minr=936432&miview=inv2&milang=nl#inv3t2>> visited on 06-09-2019.

¹⁸⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 322.

¹⁸⁷ Ibidem, 308.

¹⁸⁸ Vickers, *Indonesia*, 100.

¹⁸⁹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 313.

¹⁹⁰ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 16-95.

¹⁹¹ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*.

¹⁹² Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 305-323.

influence Westerling's methods had on the behaviour of Dutch troops during the rest of the war.¹⁹³

In addition four photos of burning houses made by KNIL conscript Henk Kavelaars will feature in this chapter.¹⁹⁴ They are part of a larger collection of photos by Kavelaars that show that he was also present at some of the action of the DST, while some of the photographs of burning houses are clearly taken during separate KNIL actions.¹⁹⁵ They show that separate from the DST the KNIL also destroyed houses, also with different means than fire.

Since historians agree that the Dutch underreported their own atrocities it is valuable to also use Indonesian sources when possible. In this case there are several statements by Indonesian dignitaries that worked with the Dutch, and there is an English language Republican report called 'Massacre in Macasser' that extensively reports on Dutch executions, burning and looting. These sources will serve as an addition to the Dutch sources and where possible they will be compared.

¹⁹³ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 158, Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 323, 739.; Buettner, *Europe*, 92.

¹⁹⁴ Collection Kavelaars, via: < <https://nimh-beeldbank.defensie.nl/> > visited on 8-10-2019.

¹⁹⁵ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 292.

Zuid-Celebes

In 1945 Zuid-Celebes had an estimated 4 million inhabitants, its capital Makassar (150.000 people) was the economic centre of the island.¹⁹⁶ After the Japanese capitulation on the 2nd September 1945 part of what the Dutch called the *Buitengewesten* (Outer Islands) was occupied by the Allies with the intention of gradually transferring power to the Dutch and repatriate the Japanese. By the 13th of July 1946 the transfer and repatriation was complete, the British left and the Dutch abolished the ‘State of Siege’ and went back to pre-war civil administration under the *Binnenlands Bestuur* (Civil Administration) (BB).¹⁹⁷ From October 1945 onwards there had been violent attacks on everything associated with the Dutch and their return. Most nobles, through whom the Dutch had ruled before the war refused to work with them again.¹⁹⁸ When KNIL troops had returned to the interior they resorted to tough action and in some areas this led to large scale uprisings and violent altercations between them and nationalist *pemoeda*’s and *ex-Heiho*’s.¹⁹⁹ Zuid-Celebes and Makassar were pivotal to Van Mook’s federal plans, therefore it was even more important to the Dutch to silence the resistance.²⁰⁰ Nationalist organisations were banned, and large scale arrests were made by the Dutch.²⁰¹ At the same time many different resistance groups tried to unite their efforts under one common purpose: decolonization. In the last months of 1946 the attacks multiplied and among other forms of attacks a total of 555 acts of arson by the resistance were registered by the Dutch.²⁰²

Both civil and military authorities sounded the alarm in reports to Batavia.²⁰³ Worried by these distressed messages the authorities in Batavia summoned colonel De Vries and resident C. Lion Cachet on November 14th. Fresh troops were promised in two meetings with the highest authorities including Spoor, Van Mook and director BB W. Hoven. Both KL-battalion 3-11 RI, mainly used for static defence, and the DST were to be sent in as reinforcements. The ‘State of War’ was declared to give the troops more room to manoeuvre

¹⁹⁶ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 5, 11.

¹⁹⁷ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 253; IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 16-54.

¹⁹⁸ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 33

¹⁹⁹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 252.; IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 48.

²⁰⁰ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 248.; IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 15.

²⁰¹ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 62

²⁰² Ibidem, 86-90.

²⁰³ Ibidem, 91.

in the four departments where the situation was the most dire: Bonthain, Makassar, Mandar and Pare-Pare.²⁰⁴

Zuid-Celebes



Map 2 Zuid-Celebes (South-Sulawesi) 1945-1950, with all departments in Roman numerals and sub-departments in Arabic numerals.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 270.

²⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, 64-65.

Arson during the ‘Zuid-Celebes affair’

Because the DST was officially still in training they resided under the authority of the *Directoraat Centrale Opleidingen* (Central Training Institution) (DCO) which was led by Indo-European colonel E. Engles who was a confidant of Spoor and a member of the General Staff.²⁰⁶ For the mission the DST was placed outside of the regular command-structure under the chief of the General Staff, general-major D.C. Buurman van Vreeden (1902-1964). In Zuid-Celebes the unit, and thus Westerling, was only accountable towards colonel De Vries, the Territorial and Troop Commander Borneo and Great East (TPC). This meant they would be able to operate independent from local Troop Command in Zuid-Celebes, which comprised three KNIL battalions and fell under lieutenant-colonel Veenendaal. However, it was the intention that they would work together with local KNIL and KL troops when necessary and possible.²⁰⁷

Based on intelligence gathered by the second in command of the DST, underlieutenant²⁰⁸ Vermeulen and the local branches of the intelligence services NEFIS and MID²⁰⁹ Westerling formulated his first operational orders on December 8th.²¹⁰ The first action was aimed at an area east of Makassar, sized several square kilometres with at the centre *kampong* Batoea, where two important resistance leaders were supposed to reside. The DST was split in two groups and the command-staff, each group was assigned to surround part of the operational area and round up the entire population to a central location. While rounding up the population orders were to shoot anyone that tried to escape or was in possession of weapons, including edged and bladed weapons. After the population was assembled all *kampongs* were to be searched and all houses where firearms were found were to be put to the torch. In Batoea Westerling was supposed to give a speech to the entire population explaining the purpose of the action: ‘there was no political motive, but their actions were aimed at the recovery of *‘rust en orde’* (law and order). Afterwards a new village

²⁰⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 270.

²⁰⁷ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 96.

²⁰⁸ The rank of underlieutenant existed only in the KNIL and was the highest rank a non-commissioned officer could reach and was equal to a 2nd lieutenant. Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 46, 799.

²⁰⁹ Netherlands East Indies Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS) this was the central intelligence service with headquarters in Batavia, later called CMI. *Militaire Inlichtingendienst* (MID) (Military Intelligence Service) these were smaller local intelligence services under command of a local military unit. Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 100.

²¹⁰ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, De Vries, toegang 237, inventarisnummer 540: ‘Operationele orders no. 1 t/m 4 van commandant reserve-eerste luitenant R.P.P. Westerling inzake acties op Zuid-Celebes’, ‘Operationele Order No. 1’.; IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 96.

head was to be named with the assignment to keep the *kampong* ‘clean’ and warn the Dutch troops in case of trouble. If the new village head did not meet the demands ‘severe measures’ were to be taken against the *kampong*.²¹¹ Thus according to the operational plan this action was aimed at killing those who violated the ban on possession of arms and force the population to obey Dutch authority.²¹²

Heavily armed and with their faces blackened, the DST started the action against Batoea in the early hours of December 11th.²¹³ They began rounding up the population at dawn, during which nine people were shot. This was all still according to orders from the operational plan, but what happened next deviates from it. Westerling then led the interrogation and investigation of the population. This resulted in the summary execution of 35 people; 11 members of ‘extreme’ Indonesian parties, 1 men accused of murder, and 23 *rampokkers*.²¹⁴ The *kampong* Batoea that had been the stage of the purge was subsequently shelled with a maximum of forty mortar shells and put to the torch by all men from group 1 and 2.²¹⁵

The next action began at 1:30 a.m. on December 12, in an area around Tandjong Boenga where arms dealers and extremists allegedly resided. This action had similar operational orders and took a similar course.²¹⁶ One section killed 6 men, and without clear justification set fire to the *kampong* Tandjongboenga, the only registered account of arson during the action.²¹⁷ 24 were killed during the roundup, which resulted in the execution of 61 more. The third and fourth operations were much closer to the city of Makassar and what stands out in the orders are two explicit restrictions. By no means was it permitted to put a house to fire because of the potential hazard to the city. Under no circumstances was it permitted to use automatic fire, only single-shots, as the terrain of the action was restrictive in size.²¹⁸ Another 114 people were killed during these two actions.²¹⁹ During the first two actions it was in the operational orders that all houses where firearms were found would be

²¹¹ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Operationele order No. 1’.

²¹² IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 99.

²¹³ On the Dutch side each platoon of approximately 25 men was armed with two brenguns, twelve tommyguns, eleven Lee Enfield rifles and four revolvers. The troopstaff was armed with tommyguns, revolvers and mortars and the commandstaff had modern radio-equipment as well. Moor, de, *Westerling’s Oorlog*, 139.

²¹⁴ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Patrouilleverslag No. 1’.

²¹⁵ A total of forty mortar shells was used during the action and nowhere else in the report is mortar fire registered. NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Patrouilleverslag No. 1’.

²¹⁶ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Operationele order No. 2’.

²¹⁷ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Patrouilleverslag No. 2’.

²¹⁸ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Operationele Order No. 3’.

²¹⁹ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Operationele Order No. 4’; NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, ‘Patrouilleverslag No. 4’.; IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 102.

put to the torch. Based on the patrol-reports only one pistol was encountered during the first two actions.²²⁰ It is not mentioned in the reports if houses were set on fire based on these grounds. No motivations are given for the two cases of arson that are reported. The action against Batoea appears to be a punitive action to make an example out of the village by very thoroughly destroying it.

Over the course of a little over two months the DST would be part of 22 separate actions, most of them only lasting one day.²²¹ Most actions would be larger than the first four and would also involve large numbers of KNIL-soldiers who were mainly used to lock down the area when the DST went in to purge. Many resistance leaders would flee to other departments or to remote mountainous areas or islands while others would be caught or killed.²²² Both IJzereef and Limpach have argued that Westerling was sent to Zuid-Celebes without specific orders, and developed these methods himself. The summary executions were only approved of by colonel de Vries after the first actions, and later by the authorities in Batavia.²²³ Only afterwards was it named '*standrecht*' (summary-law)²²⁴, to give it an air of legality, yet these methods were in fact unlawful at the time.²²⁵ In addition, the 'special jurisdiction' for summary executions given to Westerling would spread out to be applied by other KNIL-officers, while Vermeulen would lead half of the DST also applying these methods.²²⁶ Of these actions no official reports are known to exist, what we know comes from the interrogations by lieutenant-colonel Paardekooper.²²⁷ His investigation consists of extensive statements made under oath by eyewitnesses and people involved, including colonel De Vries, captain Westerling and underlieutenant Vermeulen.²²⁸

It required perpetrators to effectively instil fear in the population through visible executions on a large scale, yet most resistance leaders had fled and intelligence had dried up by January. Thus a pattern developed where pointing out 'terrorists' under pressure and even the shooting of prisoners who were already in jail became frequent.²²⁹ Vermeulen and his execution teams, together with KNIL officers captain B.E. Rijborz and major J. Stufkens who

²²⁰ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 540, 'Patrouilleverslag No. 2'.

²²¹ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 138.

²²² IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 107, 108.

²²³ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 264, 284.

²²⁴ Or '*noodrecht*' (emergency justice), '*methode-Westerling*' (the Westerling-method) or '*bijzondere bevoegdheid*' (special jurisdiction).

²²⁵ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 275 ; IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 104.

²²⁶ For how the jurisdiction for summary executions spread see: Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 274, 275.

²²⁷ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 150

²²⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 313.

²²⁹ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 151.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 292.

also received the authorization to conduct ‘emergency justice’, killed 700 people in the department of Pare-Pare in the last weeks of January.²³⁰ BB official R.A.H. Bergmann had to go to the department Soeppa immediately after an action by Rijborz and Stufkens on January 28th during which 200 Indonesians had been killed. In a letter to a colleague in Batavia he describes how several *kampongs* were burned down and ‘left and right houses were still smouldering’ while he had to go in to swear in the new *kepala kampongs* (village heads) and *kampong* police. Bergmann resigned afterwards, reluctant to be involved further with the actions.²³¹

On the 1st of February 1947, the largest individual bloodbath in Zuid-Celebes happened when at least 364 defenceless Indonesians were killed during an action under the command of Vermeulen and KNIL-officers captain Rijborz and major Stufkens. Both the perpetrators, several victims and other witnesses were heard by Paardekooper. Through their statements a picture emerges of arbitrary killings, with additional reports of multiple villages that were burnt to the ground during the action.²³²

In the sub-department of Madjene the *kampong* Galoeng Lombok and other kampongs in its vicinity were chosen as the next site for action by major Stufkens and KNIL-officer lieutenant Riepma.²³³ KNIL-lieutenant Duque was ordered to lock down one of the *kampongs* with a platoon. According to his instructions all military personnel that did not belong to the DST were not allowed to operate independently, and thus could not burn nor shoot; these actions were under the sole purview of the DST.²³⁴ According to Willem Frederik de Leeuw, a police inspector from Maros who was there as a spectator, 20 different *kampongs* were assembled. The inhabitants of each *kampong* stood together, with the *kepala kampong* in front of the rest, while the women and children were separated from the approximately 3000 men.²³⁵ From the combined statements of De Leeuw, Duque, Riepma and a *hadji* named Mohammad Sarip who was among those assembled when they were sitting in groups and the action commenced, it can be established how many *kampong* were burned down during this one action. There is a lot of overlap in their reporting and put together Batoe 2, Galoeng 2 except for the *missigit* (mosque), Segeri, Tandi and Talolo were completely or largely burned

²³⁰ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 291.

²³¹ Ibidem, 301.

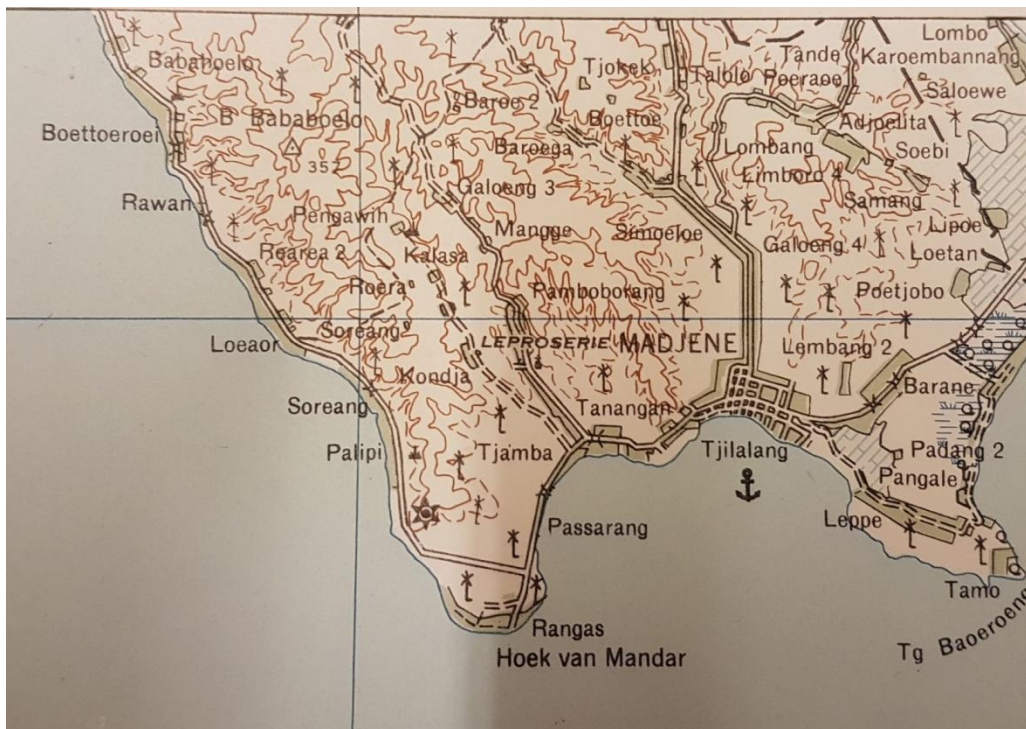
²³² Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Justitie: Archiefbescheiden Onderzoek naar Excessen in Indonesië, nummer toegang 2.09.95, inventarisnummer 86: ‘Dossier 12 en 13. De acties op Zuid-Celebes.’

²³³ NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’, ‘Verklaring van Olt J.B. Vermeulen 43 jaar’.

²³⁴ NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’ ‘Verklaring van 1e luit. Duque, oud 27 jaar te Makassar’, 6-8-1947.

²³⁵ NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’, ‘Verklaring Willem Frederik de Leeuw, 34 jaar, inspecteur van politie de 2e kl. te Maros’, 22-4-1947.

down, and in Baroega eight houses were burned down.²³⁶ Thus this makes for at least five *kampongs* that were completely or largely burned down. However, no explicit reasons or motivations for arson are given in the interrogations on the action in Madjene. Batavia immediately withdrew Vermeulen after they received news of this action, but his section now came under the command of major Stufkens and captain Rijborz.²³⁷ Further criticism in the next weeks would eventually lead to Spoor banning the authorization for ‘summary executions’ on the 21st of February and having the DST return to Batavia.²³⁸



Map 3 Part of the sub-department Madjene, department Mandar, Zuid-Celebes. The map shows that the area where the action on 1 February 1947 took place was very densely populated. Composed from earlier Dutch maps published by the U.S. Army Map Service, Washington D.C., 1943. Original size 1:125.000.²³⁹

Westerling and De Vries, the men officially in charge, had not been present at the action in Madjene but they were interrogated by Paardekooper on the actions during the affair in

²³⁶ NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’, ‘Duque’.; NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’, ‘De Leeuw’.; NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’, ‘Res. Kap. Inf. te Madjene D.M. Riepma, 21-8-1947.’; NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’, Verklaring Hadji Mohammed Sarip 55 jaar, Inam Baroega Baroega. In de zaken tegen Stufkens, Rijborz en Vermeulen, 5-5-1949.

²³⁷ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 298.

²³⁸ *Ibidem*, 304.

²³⁹ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Koloniën, Kaarten en Tekeningen, nummer toegang 4.MIKO, inventarisnummer 2555: ‘Samengesteld uit Nederlandse kaarten uitgegeven door de Topografische Dienst. Uitgave van de U.S. Army Map Service, Washington D.C., 1943’, ‘Map No 21 Southern Celebes’.

general. That Westerling had ordered arson is already clear from the actions reports but here he also provides additional motivations for it. In addition his direct superior De Vries delivers a very clear statement on arson. When confronted by Paardekooper with an eyewitness statement about a certain action Westerling partially denied:

'There were no complete *kampongs* burned down, surely some houses because bad elements were hiding in these houses. In one case I warned a *kampong* head three times, when I noticed bad elements were still hiding in his *kampong* (...) I put this *kampong* to the torch. Afterwards the *kampong* head promised improvement and we helped to rebuild the *kampong*. Subsequently there was good cooperation.'

Westerling told Paardekooper they killed 23 men and several *kampongs* were burned down because weapons were found during other actions on islands close to Makassar, specifically Tana Keke, Barrang Lompa and Barrang Tjadi.²⁴⁰ Non-cooperation and hiding 'bad elements' were given as sufficient reason for burning a *kampong* down by Westerling. The motivation he gave for burning down *kampongs* on the islands can be considered an extension of his first operational orders. In these orders burnings were to be restricted to houses where firearms were found, yet during the interrogation afterwards the discovery of weapons in general had become sufficient grounds to burn down entire *kampongs*.

On the 4th of June 1949 colonel De Vries, then employed at the Central Staff of the KNIL in Batavia, was interrogated by Paardekooper. When asked about what he knew about the entire Zuid-Celebes affair he was very explicit about arson:

'The burning of *kampong*-houses wherein discriminatory goods were found like hand grenades, ammunition and such was permitted. Houses where meetings by *rampokkers* were held and which were most of the time inhabited by terrorists themselves could be set on fire. These houses were mostly outlying, or were in a completely or partly abandoned *kampong*. Houses from which military personnel were fired upon were often burned down as a terrifying example.'²⁴¹

Colonel De Vries provided three reasons for arson: 1) The presence of weapons and ammunition. 2) Habitation or other use by 'terrorists'. 3) Firing at Dutch troops from houses. In the last case he argued this was done to set a 'terrifying example'. Thus De Vries, the

²⁴⁰ NA, MvJ 86, 'Zuid-Celebes', 'Verklaring van res. Kapitein Westerling, 28 jaar'.

²⁴¹ NA, MvJ 86, 'Zuid-Celebes', 'Getuigenverhoor Kolonel de Vries, 48 jaar, Kolonel Centrale staf KNIL Batavia', 4-6-1949.

highest military authority in the area, condoned arson and gave very clear circumstances under which he considered it an adequate measure.

Photos from the Kavelaars Collection²⁴²



Image 3 A house in a *kampong* north of Tjampa, Zuid-Celebes, where alleged Republican fighters were accommodated. Burned down as a form of retaliation by military from the 6th Company of Inf. XV based on information from other inhabitants of the *kampong*, 18-12-1946.²⁴³



Image 4 A house destroyed by fire, Zuid-Celebes, 1946, 1947.²⁴⁴

²⁴² All four photos here are from the Kavelaars collection, via: <<https://nimh-beeldbank.defensie.nl/>> visited on 1-10-2019.

²⁴³ NIMH Beeldank, H.C. Kavelaars, Objectnummer 2025-010-011.

²⁴⁴ NIMH Beeldank, H.C. Kavelaars, Objectnummer 2025-006-015.



Image 5 Despite his camouflage suit vaguely visible on the right is corporal Van Oss, KNIL Inf. XV, running for cover after he has thrown a grenade into this vacant house while on patrol between Pare-Pare and Makassar, 15-02-1947.²⁴⁵



Image 6 This house was found abandoned but it was suspected by the patrol of KNIL Inf. XV that Republican fighters had resided in it. They also found a small jar with old VOC-coins. According to Kavelaars they shared the coins and put the house on fire, 02-03-1947.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ NIMH Beeldank, H.C. Kavelaars, Objectnummer 2025-007-024.

²⁴⁶ NIMH Beeldank, H.C. Kavelaars, Objectnummer 2025-007-028.

‘Massacre in Macasser’

The Dutch and Indonesians also fought the war on a diplomatic level, and next to a very different perspective also had access to different sources of information.²⁴⁷ Since Dutch reports probably underreported on burning and destruction it is interesting to see what Indonesian Republican authorities and federal Indonesian dignitaries that were interrogated by a Dutch civil servant can add to the Dutch sources. In addition these sources do put a price on Indonesian houses and properties while an often heard comment in Dutch sources is that Indonesian houses did not have much value and were easily rebuilt.²⁴⁸

In the second half of 1947 the Republican Ministry of Information in Djokjakarta published a report with the title *Massacre in Macasser. It happened in this time in South-Celebes Indonesia. Anno domini 1947*.²⁴⁹ There has been little attention to this report, possibly due to the fact that Dutch historians have always regarded this document as heavily exaggerated propaganda because of the inflated casualty numbers.²⁵⁰ The opening page of this Republican report estimates that around 30.000 Indonesian civilians were murdered by the Dutch in Makassar.²⁵¹ Soekarno added to this and made 40.000 the official casualty number, yet according to military historian and former TNI lieutenant-colonel Natzir Said this was ‘purely fictional’ to gain sympathy on the international stage.²⁵² Contained in the *Massacre in Macasser* report are eyewitness reports which were previously published in the Dutch press, but not a much is known about how the rest of the report was composed.²⁵³ According to the report burning and looting by Dutch soldiers and local police were a structural facet of the actions.²⁵⁴ That this indeed happened is confirmed by Kavelaars who wrote in a caption for a photograph that they looted old coins and afterwards put the house on fire. Dutch reports rarely contain mention of similar issues, although it was a known issue among the army command, and something that according to Limpach shows a lack of discipline among the troops.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁷ Luttikhuis & Harinck, ‘Koloniale perspectief’, 54.

²⁴⁸ J.W. Hofwijk, *Blubber* (Heemstede 1948) 179.

²⁴⁹ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 149

²⁵⁰ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 308.; IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 149.

²⁵¹ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, De Vries, toegang 237, inventarisnummer 545: ‘Verslag Massacre in Macasser’.

²⁵² Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 308.

²⁵³ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 149

²⁵⁴ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 545, ‘Massacre’, Passim.

²⁵⁵ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 419-429.

There is also an appendix to the report, a ‘List of losses suffered by the population in South-Celebes during the purge’. The list is comprised of the actions by the Dutch army and local police during the period between January 1946 until March 1947 but claimed to be far from exhaustive. Next to the probably heavily inflated casualty numbers it also reports on the numbers of houses burnt, and other valuables that were destroyed or stolen.²⁵⁶ The list comes to a total of 2233 houses that were supposedly burnt down in a period of over a year, as well as a combined damage through looting of over 5 million guilders. It is specifically reported that 100 houses were burnt down in *kampong* Galoeng Lombok on 1-1-1947. However this action occurred on the 1st of February 1947, in the report itself the action in Galoeng Lombok close to Madjene is also described as occurring in January.²⁵⁷ Thus it appears as if mistakes were made concerning the dates and both the list and the report refer to the action on the 1st of February in Madjene under Vermeulen, Stufkens and Rijborz. Another item on the list that corroborates with the interrogation of Westerling, is that on the 3rd of January 1947 on Tanahkeke²⁵⁸ Island 150 houses were burned down. Westerling did not provide a date, but IJzereef also mentions these actions and writes they took place early in January 1947.²⁵⁹

In the report a house ‘including properties and unhusked paddy (rice)’ that was burned down is estimated to be a loss of approximately fl. 1000.-.²⁶⁰ Although this valuation might be on the high side, according to an inflation correction tool made by the International Institute for Social History (IISG) this would amount to circa €5.000 today.²⁶¹ In 2019 the Dutch Court of Justice ruled that the bereaved family members of executed resistance fighters will receive a monetary compensation of €20.000 by the Dutch state if the court can establish that they are indeed family members of the executed.²⁶² Article 13.8 of the ‘State of War and Siege’ reads that the military authorities are required to pay compensation for occupation or use afterwards. According to Dutch historian Peter Keppy large tobacco companies have tried to claim destruction of their properties by the KNIL that happened prior to the Japanese invasion. However, these claims were denied.²⁶³ The recent verdict of the Dutch Court of

²⁵⁶ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 545, ‘Massacre’, ‘List of losses suffered by the population in South-Celebes during the purge’.

²⁵⁷ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 545, ‘Massacre’, 21.

²⁵⁸ Spelled ‘Tana Keke’ by Paardekooper.

²⁵⁹ IJzereef, *Zuid-Celebes*, 113.

²⁶⁰ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 545, ‘Massacre’, 9.

²⁶¹ Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, <<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php>> visited on 1-10-2019.

²⁶² NRC <<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2019/10/01/hof-geweld-van-militairen-in-nederlands-indie-uit-1947-niet-verjaard-a3975179>> visited on 10-10-2019.

²⁶³ Keppy, *Vernieling*, 233.

Justice judged that in the murder and torture cases the statute of limitations does not apply as the court acknowledges that the people who lived in rural areas in Zuid-Celebes had no access to courts or chance to obtain justice at the time.²⁶⁴ It remains unlikely claims of property destruction will receive similar treatment, since it could also be argued that what is called ‘disruptive violence’ here is a different degree of violence than bodily harm, which is considered as extraordinarily grave by the court.²⁶⁵ However, it might be that future litigation involving property destruction claims may find itself leaning on article 13 of the SOB.

Pro-Dutch Indonesian dignitaries reported large scale arson as well. Louis Graf, an assistant-resident was sent to Zuid-Celebes by chief judicial official in Makassar B.J. Lambers from 7 to 15 February 1947 to do research among Indonesian dignitaries on the situation there.²⁶⁶ The Radja (ruler) of Goa reported to him that Dutch soldiers had searched his palace without notice. In addition in his territory 300-500 houses were burned down, and a large amount of *padi* went up in flames. Graf also asked the prime-minister of East-Indonesia Nadjamoedin Daeng Malewa (b. 1907), who told him he regarded the statements of the Radja as correct.²⁶⁷ While minister Hoesain of East-Indonesia was more diplomatic when he wrote that ‘burning down houses, whether or not justifiably motivated by military necessity, caused bad blood’.²⁶⁸ These reports together allow for the conclusion that burning down a property to disguise the fact the valuables were stolen was also a motivation for arson for Dutch troops.

²⁶⁴ Uitspraak Gerechtshof Den Haag, 1-10-2019, punt 15.4, via:

<<https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:GHDHA:2019:2524>> visited on 10-10-2019.

²⁶⁵ Ibidem, punt 15.2

²⁶⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 303.

²⁶⁷ S.L. Wal, van der, P.J. Drooglever en M.J.B. Schouten red., *Officiële Bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950*, 20 delen (Den Haag 1978-1991) deel 7, 6 januari-20 maart 1947, 194. ‘Aanteekeningen over Zuid-Celebes’ van assistent-resident (Graf) t/b van de algemene regeringscommissaris van Borneo en de Grote –Oost’, 22-2-1947.

²⁶⁸ NA, MvJ 86, ‘Zuid-Celebes’, ‘Brief van minister Hoesain’, Makassar, 20-1-1947.

List of losses suffered by the population in South-Celebes during the purge.

K.P. 1113

No.	Date	Region; kampong where incident occurred:	Victims under the people:	Houses burnt:	Properties looted Specification: Value:	Estimation of casualties:	Remarks:
A, District Palopo I, Under-distr. Palopo, Masamba etc.							
1.	From January until June 1946	Palopo village	300	50			
2.		Kampong Balandal	20	20			
3.		" Bua	25	3			
4.		" Bilo	100	10			
5.		" Ponrang	200	—	please see the note in the complete report		
6.		" Lasompong	9	—		5000	
7.		" Pombakra	30	50			
8.		" Lamassi	40	70			
9.		" Masamba and environs	200	300			
10.		Malki and Wetu	500	200			
II, Samenandjung Kolaka,							
11.		Rate ²		20			
12.		Kolaka		50			
13.		Mangolo		50			
14.		Pabian		—			
15.		Lapao-pao		10			
16.		Tambali		—	please see the note in the complete report		
17.	idem	Wolo		2			
18.		Wowo		200		2000	
19.		Sesua-suwa		200			
20.		Mala-mala		70			
21.		Pakkui		100			
22.		Satou		20			
23.		Selewawo		2			
24.		Toloia		50			
25.		Sampa		10			
B, Mandar district,							
26.	1-1-1947	Kampong Galung-Lombok (Balanipadistr.)	750	100	clothes, jewelries, paddy etc.		Burning in Kampong Galung-Tambu-Barga
27.	4-2-1947	Kampong Pambawuang	300			4000	
C, Macassar district I, underdistr. Maros							
28.	Febr. 1947	Kampong Tjampulit-Tjamba (Maros)	2	—			
29.	"	Reatowa-Malawa (Maros)	5	9	clothes, paddy, etc.	f 1000	
30.	March "	Padangloko-Tjamba (Maros)	—	1	idem	?	
31.	Febr. 1947	Patonjomang (Maros)	1	—			
32.	Jan. 1947	Tjemana Kapang (Maros)	4	—			
II, Gowa,							
33.	2-12-'46	Kampong Tandjung Bunga (Karuwisi)	200	30	clothes, jewelries etc.		
34.	9-12-'46	" Patung-Sapria-Bajang (Limbung)	50	100	idem		
35.	24-12-'46	Djongaja (Karuwisi)	63	—	idem		
III, Galesong (Takalar),							
36.	9-12-'46	Kampong Mangindara	8	—		200	
37.	9-12-'46	" Kalukubodo	2	—	property looted	f 3000	
38.	12-12-'46	" Kodotong	f	1	idem	f 2000	
39.	15-12-'46	" Borongtjola	100	104	idem	f 10400	
40.	16-12-'46	" Bontorea	9	7	idem	f 7000	
41.	17-12-'46	" Sawakung	20	4	idem	f 4000	
32.	3-1-1947	IV, Tanahkeke (island)	250	150	jewelries		especially rich persons
V, Polombangkong,							
43.	Dec. 1946	Kampong Bontolobang	21			15000	many kampongsburned down & properties looted.
44.	Dec. 1946	" Bangea	100				
VI, Djenepono,							
45.	Dec. 1946	Kampong Maere (Binanru)	(1) 40	40		f 5,000,000	executed by military & police personnel
46.	"	" Arungkeke (")	(2) 6	23			
47.	N.v. 1946	" Batana Bangkala	70	150			3000 from Djenepono
48.	Nov. 1946	" Bulu-bulu "	30	17			idem.
48.		" "	5	10			
49.	Sept. 1946	VII, Pangkadjene Maros,	11				By mil. personnel from Djenepono children were burned with the houses and shot at
							(1) 7 persons maltreated
							(2) 2 idem

N. B. Full explanation can be obtained in the complete reports.

T O T A L G E N E R A L

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Image 7 Appendix to the *Massacre in Macassar* report.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ NIMH, De Vries, 237, inv. 545, 'Massacre', 'List'.



Image 8 House in the department of Goa, Zuid-Celebes. The houses were built on poles, and consisted of bamboo, palm-leaves and other wood.²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ H. Th. Chabot, *Verwantschap, stand en sexe in Zuid-Celebes* (Groningen/ Djakarta 1950) 8.

Conclusion

According to Westerlings operational orders for the first two actions all houses that contained firearms were to be burned down. From a later interrogation of Westerling it is possible to establish that hiding 'bad elements' and hiding other weapons were also provided by Westerling as motivation for setting entire *kampongs* on fire. From the interrogations it becomes clear that during an action the commandos were allowed to burn 'when necessary' while other KNIL troops were not allowed to resort to these measures. Most importantly the highest military authority in the region, colonel De Vries, provided three motives for arson during the actions: 1) Finding weapons and ammunition. 2) Habitation or other use of a house by 'terrorists' and, 3) Shooting at Dutch troops from houses. Another motivation for arson, obviously not allowed by army command, was that Dutch troops burned down houses after they looted it. Taking the orders by Westerling and De Vries into account it can be concluded that during the course of the Zuid-Celebes affair arson was a systematic part of the actions of the DST.

It is difficult to make quantitative analyses since information on many actions during the Zuid-Celebes affair is lacking. During some actions it can be established with reasonable certainty that a couple of houses or an entire *kampong* were burned down. While there are also two actions where multiple *kampongs* were largely or completely burned down, which according to the Republican report would amount to a combined 250 houses. In total the DST undertook 22 separate actions thus it does not appear to be unreasonable to establish that at least 500-1000 houses would have been burned down during these actions. While the photos by Kavelaars prove that regular KNIL-units also independently resorted to arson when the DST was not involved, thus it could also be the case that during all Dutch military actions in this period thousands of houses were burned down by Dutch troops. Which would be corroborated by the Republican report and the statements by Indonesian dignitaries.

Chapter 3 Arson in the diaries of the 1st Division ‘7 December’ in West-Java (1947-1949)

*‘They can have no rest. They have to be persecuted deep into the mountains. Their dwellings have to be destroyed. This is the only way to keep our own supply routes clean and secure the occupied area.’*²⁷¹ Quote from the 1949 remembrance book of the 1st Division ‘7 December’ (KL).

For the men of the *7 December Divisie* the Indonesian opponent proved to be elusive and almost impossible to distinguish from the population.²⁷² While new resistance fighters kept infiltrating West-Java in a steady flow, the Dutch spread out their troops ever thinner to ‘secure’ more terrain. The Dutch supply lines were always in danger: roads were blocked or destroyed, bridges blown up and every convoy was fired upon. Thus, according to the author of the 1949 remembrance book of the Dutch army division stationed in West-Java, the places where the opponent ate and slept had to be destroyed to keep them from undermining the restoration of Dutch authority.²⁷³ As during every guerrilla war the Indonesian resistance lived and moved among the people that also provided new recruits. While the guerrilla also depended on the population to provide them with food, shelter and intelligence, either voluntarily or forced.²⁷⁴ Thus the ‘dwellings’ of the resistance were often those of the civilian population. Dutch historian Henk Schulte Nordholt indicates that official reports are inclined to conceal colonial violence, but occasionally provide glimpses of a different reality.²⁷⁵

In this chapter cases of arson and destruction of Indonesian property reported in the personal diaries written by Dutch KL soldiers and officers that operated in West-Java will be compared with materials from the archives of the Dutch armed forces. The official reports are repetitive and the amount of reports still in the archives is enormous, therefore the diaries are intended as an ‘entrance point’ to research whether or not there is reporting on burning and destruction in official reports. Furthermore it is of interest whether the same actions are reported in general and whether there are discrepancies in the given motivations between the two sources. Are the soldiers more open and maybe more critical in their personal diaries? It will also be attempted to uncover a dominant motive for arson and destruction. As well as

²⁷¹ A. van Sprang, *Wij werden geroepen. De geschiedenis van de 7 December Divisie* (Den Haag 1949) 125.

²⁷² Frakking, ‘Bayonet’, 35.

²⁷³ Sprang, van, *Geroepen*, 125.

²⁷⁴ Brocades Zaalberg, ‘Civil and military’, 73.

²⁷⁵ Schulte Nordholt, ‘Genealogy’, 38.

examining differences between reporting and intensity of arson between different brigades and battalions within the same division in West-Java.

Diaries

The Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH) compiled a database of over 6.600 quotes from 120 contemporary and unpublished ‘egodocuments’ written by 57 Dutch soldiers.²⁷⁶ At the courtesy of Rémy Limpach and Tico Onderwater at the NIMH and with the help of Thijs Brocades Zaalberg the accumulated fragments on arson and destruction could be used for this thesis.²⁷⁷ The database predominantly consists of writings by Dutch KL soldiers. As Gert Oostindie already noticed in his book *Soldaat in Indonesië* about published egodocuments, there is a lack of written documents by KNIL personnel.²⁷⁸ Since the majority of the Dutch KL troops were stationed on Java it makes sense that most reported cases of arson are situated there.²⁷⁹ In the database 55 cases of arson and destruction are reported, of which 45 are destruction of habitation and public buildings (mosque, passer) where it can be established with reasonable certainty that this has been done by Dutch troops, excluding the use of heavy weapons.

Thus in the unpublished egodocuments there are 45 reports of arson compared to 90 in the published egodocuments used by Oostindie. In the 659 published egodocuments the experiences of 1362 soldiers are recorded who report 90 cases of arson.²⁸⁰ While from the unpublished diaries in the NIMH database there are 57 different authors who report 45 cases of arson. On average there are 0,07 cases of arson reported per author in the published egodocuments. While there are 0,79 cases of arson reported per author in the unpublished egodocuments. This means that authors on average report on arson over 11 times as often in the unpublished egodocuments as in the published ones. Of course the equation is a bit lop-

²⁷⁶ Information on the database provided by Tico Onderwater at the NIMH.

²⁷⁷ NIMH database, version 08-02-2019, the fragments in the database come from 120 unpublished sources by 57 different authors: mostly diaries, some original, others copied or typed, and also some letters. Based on the amount of diaries the NIMH had to go through to come to this selection it would have never been possible for one person to come to these results. Since the fragments alone do not provide for additional context I have also read parts of the diaries in the NIMH archive. The NIMH and its affiliated historians have also made use of the database themselves, therefore some fragments used here will already be used in their work, although I have tried to avoid that as much as possible and indicated it in the footnotes when this was the case.

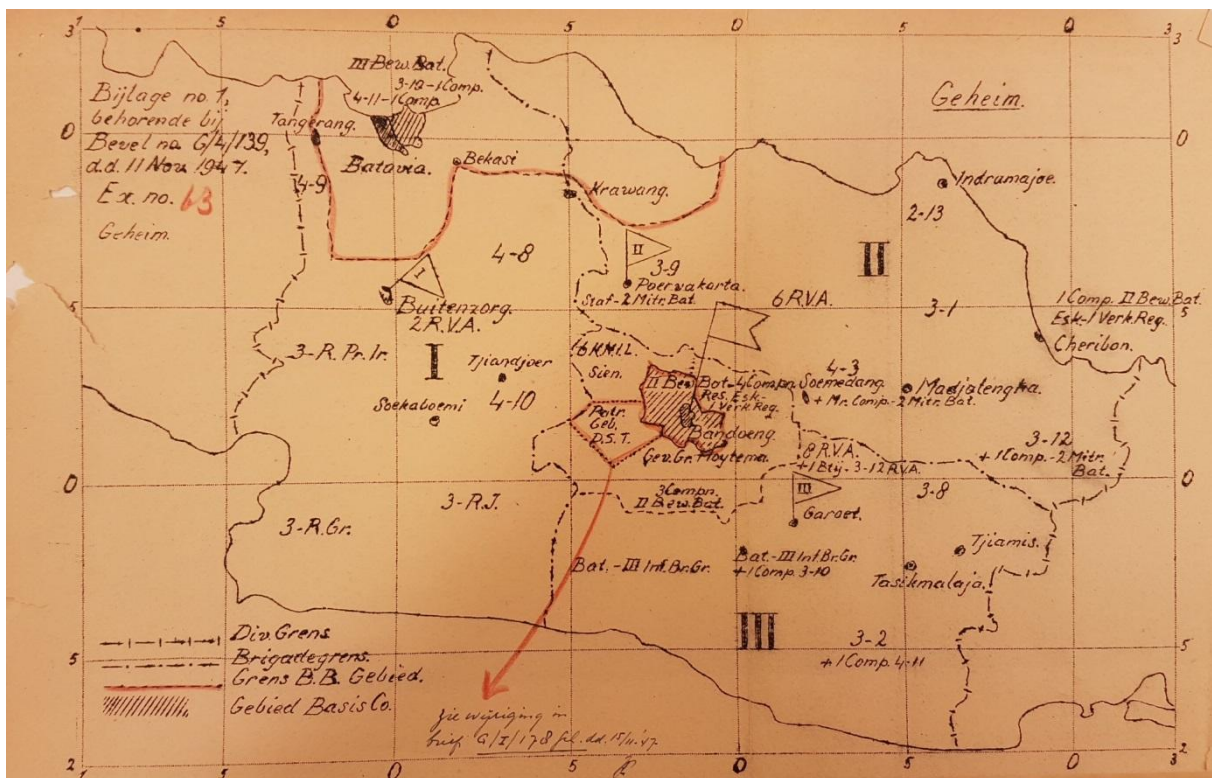
²⁷⁸ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 40.

²⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 163.

²⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, 150.

sided because there are many more authors of published egodocuments, but it appears as if quite some self-censorship has been applied to the published egodocuments.²⁸¹

Out of the 45 cases 34 took place in West-Java. To further narrow down the search for archival evidence nine soldiers of the 1st Division '7 December'²⁸² responsible for 28 of the 34 cases of arson in West-Java will be tracked down.²⁸³



Map 4 Map of West-Java, 11 November 1947, from the archives of the Territorial and Troop Command West-Java.²⁸⁴ I, II, III are the geographical areas of the Infantry Brigade Groups at this particular point in time. With their headquarters at the small numbered flags.

The archival material that will be used here is stored in the National Archive in The Hague, under the Ministry of Defence: Armed Forces Dutch East Indies.²⁸⁵ As can be seen on

²⁸¹ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 48.

²⁸² The 1st Division was named after a speech by Queen Wilhelmina, which she delivered on 7 December 1942 in which she envisioned renewed and more equal relations within the Kingdom at the end of the Second World War. The Division was usually called the '7 December Divisie'; Buettner, *Europe*, 81.; Sprang, van, *Geroepen*, title page.

²⁸³ The fragments have to be interesting enough to do further research, and/or to make it worthwhile either one author had to have at least more than one interesting fragment, or multiple authors had to belong to the same battalion.

²⁸⁴ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 3215: 'Bevelen en instructies van het Territoriaal tevens Troepencommando West-Java, 1947-1948', 'Bijlage no 1, behorende bij bevel na G/4/139, 11-11-1947'.

the map the three Infantry Brigade Groups each operated in a distinct geographical area in West-Java. The staff of these brigades produced daily intelligence-, and operational-reports with information on all units in their area.²⁸⁶ The staff also produced ‘war-diaries’ where all these reports are summarized. In addition, battalion commanders were ordered in 1949 to create ‘war-diaries’ based on their actions during the war. The war diaries created by some units are still be found in the archives while from other units only the documents that were used to compile them are there. A wide variety of documents were used to compile the war-diaries, such as action-, operational-, intelligence- and patrol-reports, histories of the unit, operational orders and other relevant papers.²⁸⁷ These archival records will be examined and combined with fragments from the diaries, but first to provide context a brief general picture of the circumstances and situations during the actions in West-Java will be provided.

West-Java

Before the start of the first Dutch ‘Police Action’, which took place from the 21st of July until the 5th of August 1947, the Dutch only controlled a few small territories on the north side of Java. Specifically the surroundings of Semarang in the centre, an area around Surabaya in the east, and a strip from Batavia via Buitenzorg (Bogor) to Bandung in the west.²⁸⁸ West-Java came under Dutch control after the offensive, and on 25 February 1948 the federal state *Negara Pasundan* was established with leaders from the Sundanese community, in line with Van Mook’s federal plans.²⁸⁹ The main Dutch forces that were deployed here from October 1946 onwards were conscripts from the *7 December Divisie*.²⁹⁰ The division amounted to

²⁸⁵ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132.

²⁸⁶ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2251-2300: ‘Oorlogsdagboeken’.

²⁸⁷ There is large discrepancy when it comes to the ‘quality’ of the war-diaries, some battalion commanders put a lot of effort in and produced very detailed documents while others settled for very concise and incomplete reports. Notwithstanding instructions from headquarters in 1949 only a limited amount of units from the *7 December Divisie* handed over their archives to the division commander. In addition archivists from the Dutch National Archive in The Hague have concluded that ‘rigorous decimation and destruction’ of archival material must have taken place before it was sent back to The Netherlands. NA, SNI, 2.13.132 The accompanying PDF-file: ‘Inventaris van de collectie archieven Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, (1938-1939) 1941-1957 (1960)’ 30, 31. Via:

<<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.13.132?activeTab=inleiding&searchTerm=Collectie%20oorlogsdagboeken%20van%20de%20Staf%207%20December#tab-heading>> visited on 10-07-2019.

²⁸⁸ R. Cribb, *Historical atlas of Indonesia* (Richmond 2000) 156, 157.

²⁸⁹ Frakking, ‘Bayonet’, 31.

²⁹⁰ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 88.

16.000 men at the end of 1946 and stood under command of general-major H.J.J.W. Dürst Britt (KL). It consisted of three brigades that each stood under command of a colonel, a brigade officially consisted of 3.000 men, but since the units that operated in their ‘vak’ (geographical area) also fell under their command they were larger and operated under the name Infantry Brigade Group.²⁹¹ These consisted of battalions (800 men) led by a lieutenant-colonel, which again consisted of 6 companies (125-190 men) led by a major or captain. A company was further split up in 3 platoons led by a lieutenant, and each platoon could also be split up in 3 sections.²⁹²

In the multifaceted civil war that unfolded in West-Java many groups fought for influence.²⁹³ The Priangan and the region around Bandung were the centres of a struggle for regional control between the Islamic party Masyumi and its armed wings, the Republican army and communist forces.²⁹⁴



Map 5 West-Java during the 1945-1950 war.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ See map 4.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 46; Sprang, van, *Geroepen*, 242.

²⁹² Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 46.; In case of war it not uncommon that companies are led by first lieutenants because experienced officers become scarce.

²⁹³ Knight, ‘Slawi’, 609.

²⁹⁴ For instance Hizbullah, Sabillillah but also communist Pesindo were active here. C. Formichi, *Islam and the making of Indonesia: Kartosuwiryo and political Islam in 20th century Indonesia* (Leiden 2012) 94.

²⁹⁵ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 64, 65.

During the first ‘Police Action’ the Dutch occupied most of West-Java. Although they controlled most of the cities, they were often unable to effectively do the same in the Javanese countryside. The Dutch tried to pacify West-Java, yet despite some minor successes they were never able to defeat the Siliwangi Division of the TNI and the many militias operating in the area.²⁹⁶ In accordance with the Renville Agreement of January 1948, that divided Java between the Dutch and the Republic of Indonesia, Republican forces retreated from West-Java to Central-Java where they could reorganise while the Dutch further pursue their federal plans.²⁹⁷ Under the leadership of *Darul Islam* (DI), Islamic militias including *Hizbullah* and *Sabilillah* formed the *Tentara Islam Indonesia* (TII) that kept fighting against the Dutch.²⁹⁸ From the middle of 1948 Republican troops increasingly rejoined the guerrilla which led to more problems for the Dutch troops.²⁹⁹ At the start of the second ‘Police Action’ (19-12-1948 until 5-1-1949) the TNI commanders escaped the Dutch attack on Djokjakarta and spread out over Java to start an all-out guerrilla war.³⁰⁰ In West-Java the entire Siliwangi-Division re-infiltrated and soon Dutch units, like everywhere else in Java, became increasingly isolated and forced into defence. The opponent was numerically far superior and attacks on all infrastructure and communication lines increased, while the population increasingly supported the guerrillas.³⁰¹ Despite the heavy burden of daily patrols and altercations with the opponent many Dutch soldiers still found time to put their experiences and thoughts to paper during these years. Combined with official reports their reports will be the basis of the next paragraph.

²⁹⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 55.

²⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, 56.

²⁹⁸ Frakking, ‘Bayonet’, 37.

²⁹⁹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 116.

³⁰⁰ T.B. Simatupang, *Het laatste jaar van de Indonesische vrijheidsstrijd 1948-1949. Merdeka een authentiek verslag door de voormalig chef-staf van de Indonesische strijdkrachten* (Kampen 1985) 18.

³⁰¹ P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (Den Haag 1991) 214, 242-245.



Image 9 and 10 Photos from the album of an unknown KL-soldier. Part of a series of 5 photos of arson by Dutch troops presumably somewhere in Java. With texts written on the back such as: 'put the red rooster into it', 'that burns nicely' and 'it's relaxed watching after hard labour'.³⁰²

³⁰² The owner of the website never responded to a request for additional information on the photographs, via: <https://7mei.nl/eeherstel3/> visited on 12-09-2018.

Archives and diaries compared

The diaries are organized per Infantry Brigade Group, starting with the 1st Infantry Brigade Group. Every section starts with the author that reported the earliest case and the fragments of one author will stay grouped together, although sometimes this will be at the expense of the general chronological order.

1st Infantry Brigade Group

The 1st Infantry Brigade Group of the *7 December Divisie* had its headquarters in Buitenzorg (Bogor). Private G.D. Deen served in battalion 4-10 RI (Regiment Infantry) and he wrote about four cases of arson that all took place during the same patrol that lasted for a week in January 1948. On Saturday the 17th they headed into enemy territory with a 32 strong patrol. On the 18th they burned *kampong* Tjigoenoeng Herang, from which they had been under fire that morning, ‘to the ground’. The next day they saw eight men flee from a *kampong* and consequently burned it down. The 21st they ‘swept’ *kampong* Bodjangkolé but the enemy had already left. They thoroughly searched every house and found 5 carbine cartridges, after which they set the *kampong* aflame. The last case happened on the 22nd when they found some TNI papers in a house and burned it down.³⁰³ These cases are not recorded in any of the official reports but there is some destruction by other Dutch troops reported in the same week; the house of a ‘gang’ leader is attacked and destroyed and during another patrol a *markas* was destroyed.³⁰⁴ The Indonesian word ‘*markas*’ translates to army post, headquarters, depot or warehouse, this appears to be a very broad term that was used by the Dutch to indicate enemy locations.³⁰⁵

Corporal W.T.J. Jansen from 1-2 RVA (Regiment Field Artillery) served in the artillery and was thus often far removed from the targets of their actions. His diary entry makes clear he was not used to the sort of action he participated in on the 16th of March

³⁰³ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Losse stukken, toegang 057, inv.nr. 3292: ‘Dagboek G.D. Deen’, 17-1-1948 - 22-1-1948.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 435.

³⁰⁴ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 3267: ‘4 Bataljon 10 Regiment Infanterie (4-10 RI), 1947, 1949’. (nothing); Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2253: ‘Staf 1 Infanteriebrigadegroep nrs. 354-802.’, 23-1-1948, 26-1-1948. (other cases).

³⁰⁵ Oxford dictionaries: <<https://id.oxforddictionaries.com/translate/indonesian-english/markas>> visited on 10-09-2019.

1949.³⁰⁶ On that day he was sent on a punitive-patrol to Baros, and because it is such an interesting fragment a lengthy part will be quoted here:

‘A large patrol of circa 30 men was assembled with the intention to undertake a punitive-patrol to Baros, where Joop Snaterse was killed a couple of days earlier. We had to tell the population that they had to abandon their houses and take their most essential belongings because within half an hour the entire *kampong* would be burned down. Our strict orders were that we could not use any violence. The *Loerah* [village head] was told this was punishment for harbouring the gang that was responsible for the ambush that caused the live of one soldier and wounded others. He was told to notify all his colleagues because from now on this would be the consequence in similar cases. (...) From now on illegal possession of weapons would be followed by imprisonment and the death-penalty. (...) I compared our own behaviour in Baros as closely resembling that of the SS-troops in Russia. (...) During this punitive patrol we literally sent the population of Baros into the woods and, after searching their houses for weapons and people according to our instructions, we set the whole *kampong* aflame. In that time *kampong* houses mainly consisted out of bamboo and *atap* [palm leaves], only the *Loerah* owned a stone house....I know I brought two things from this patrol, thus in fact plundered. A copper iron and an old leather briefcase.’³⁰⁷

Later on Jansen writes that on the one hand he agreed with the necessity for tough sanctions that, according to Jansen, resulted from orders from Batavia. On the other hand, he did not like the methods used, to show his displeasure he notes he began singing the ‘Horst Wessel’ song, the anthem of the NSDAP.³⁰⁸ Jansen’s detailed story is very interesting for a number of reasons. He felt harsher measures were welcome but only when restricted to the TNI, instead of being applied to the general population. He regarded what happened here as collective punishment and even compared their methods to that of the Nazis on the Eastern Front. He also said the order for tougher action came from Batavia, but considering his low rank this statement may very well be speculation, as it is unlikely he had received or read the orders directly. Furthermore he admitted to plundering, and he describes the materials from which the houses in the *kampong* were built. According to the official report on the 14th of March, a grenade was thrown into the armoured vehicle in which Snaterse drove, which cost him his life and wounded five other soldiers. However, nothing is written about the punitive

³⁰⁶ Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 163.

³⁰⁷ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Sweep, toegang 545, inv. nr. 135: ‘Dagboek W.T.J. Jansen’, 16-3-1949.

³⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, 18-3-1949.

expedition that followed.³⁰⁹ The reasons for arson and destruction that are given in the two diaries are the discovery of ammunition or papers, and revenge through collective punishment. Although none of these cases can be found in the archives there are other cases in the daily operational reports of the 1st Infantry Brigade Group where a *markas* is destroyed.

2nd Infantry Brigade Group

The war-diary of battalion 3-9 RI contains multiple cases regarding houses and *kampongs* that were burned down after being marked as a *markas*.³¹⁰ There are three authors that served in this battalion that also made note of arson in their diaries, they specifically mention houses being used by the enemy as motivation for the burnings.³¹¹ No motivation is provided for several other cases. Sergeant Dijkstra twice refers to actions of the para-troopers that were active in this area when it comes to large scale arson, although he himself was not present for these actions.³¹² Some of the cases in the private diaries can in some form be traced in the archival records and combining the two provides more clarity into what happened. Unfortunately, combining the records did not provide new insights concerning the motivations surrounding arson.³¹³

Lieutenant B. Hoogstraten 3-1 RI, served in another battalion and reports at least four accounts of arson, of which two cases stand out. On the 12th of September 1947 a road was blocked with trees for which they blamed the population of the *kampongs* that were adjacent to the road. Hoogstraten and his patrol burned down parts of multiple *kampongs* to show what sort of collective punishment would follow if the people did not keep the roads clear in the future.³¹⁴ This case is untraceable in the (very concise) war-diary of this battalion, nor can it

³⁰⁹ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2262: '2 Regiment Veldartillerie. 1946-1949, 1 en 3 Afdeling, 1946 september 1-1949 november', 14-3-1949.

³¹⁰ For instance: Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2280: '3-9 Regiment Infanterie. 1946 september 1-1949 oktober', p. 72, 83.

³¹¹ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Dekolonisatie van Nederlands-Indië (1945-1950), toegang 509, inv. nr. 1105: 'Dagboek R. Krabbendam', 25-10-1947; Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Sweep, toegang 545, inv. nr 110: 'Dagboek F.H. Dijkstra', 2-11-1947

³¹² NIMH, Sweep, 545, inv. 110, 'Dijkstra', 17-1-1948, 25-2-1948; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 331.

³¹³ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Dekolonisatie van Nederlands-Indië (1945-1950), toegang 509, inv. nr. 1293: 'Dagboek C.W. van Bijsterveld', 18-11-1947.; NA, SNI 2280, '3-9 RI', p. 74.; NIMH, Sweep, 545, inv. 110, 'Dijkstra', 2-11-1947.; NA, SNI 2280, '3-9 RI', p. 70.

³¹⁴ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Losse stukken, toegang 057, inv. nr. 5461: 'Dagboek B. Hoogstraten', 12-9-1947.

be found in the records of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Group.³¹⁵ Historian Brocades Zaalberg, who also uses this fragment in an article, writes that the war intensified in this period. Hoogstraten's platoon came under fire on a daily basis, while their own methods became harsher, Hoogstraten even compared themselves to a 'German occupying army of sorts'.³¹⁶

The second case, a punitive action by 3-1 RI, is also present in a daily operational report of the 2nd Infantry Brigade:

'15 nov: Punitive action against the kpgs. from which a patrol was heavily fired upon on 13 November [1947] and from which the population repeatedly attacked a patrol from 3-1 RI; time 06.30-14.00 hour; own troops 140 men; the following *kampongs* punished; Kaliwedi (7155), Oedjoeng Semi (7255), Kalimati (7257), Goea (7058), Boendel (7359), Kalensoeda (7160), Hendra (7261); gang had already disappeared; just like the majority of the population; several running away shot down by lock-down troops; no own losses.'³¹⁷

This was a retaliation because a patrol of 20 Dutch soldiers led by lieutenant Thijs had been hunting down a 'gang' of around 500 men, when they suddenly encountered them in an open *sawah* (rice field). According to Hoogstraten the opponent was well armed and accompanied by many Japanese soldiers, as well as some British Indian soldiers. Lieutenant Thijs and a sergeant died, while another sergeant and several others were wounded. The population of the *kampongs* in the vicinity had all joined the gang when they attacked it. Thijs. Therefore harsh measures were required according to the Dutch and four platoons marched out under command of major Sweers. Each platoon was led by a lieutenant of which Hoogstraten was one. In his diary he wrote:

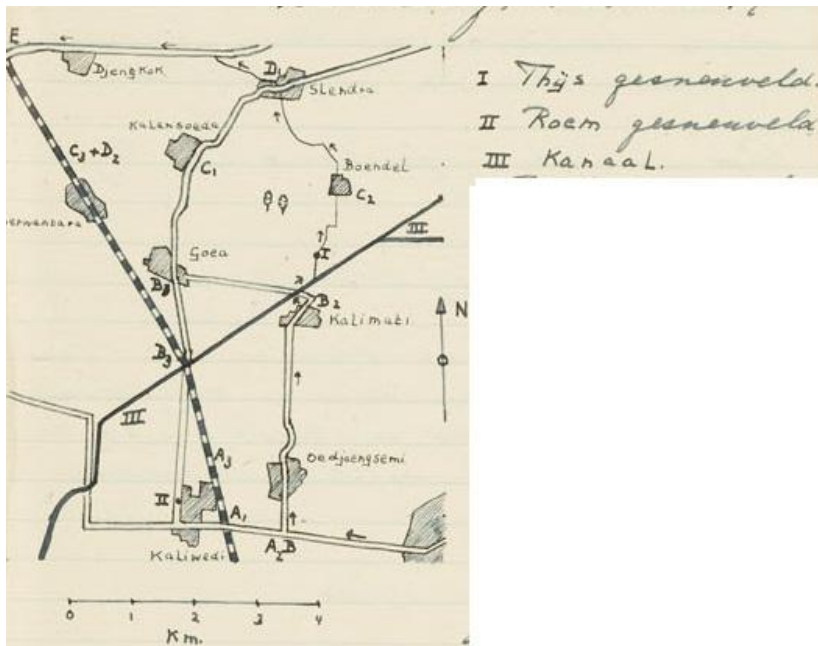
'Of these places, Goea and Kalimati, half was burned down. Subsequently I occupied C2 [Boendel] after it had been hit with 30 three inch mortars from B2 [Kalimati] Smit now took C1 [Kalensoeda]. C1 and C2 [Boendel] were wiped of the map. I moved on to D1 [Slendra] where Smit and De Jonge arrived later. Half of Slendra burned down.'³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2267: 'Staf 2 Infanteriebrigadegroep. 1947 september-december'; Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2275: 'Staf 2 Infanteriebrigadegroep, Oorlogsdagboek, 1946 september 1-1949 september'; Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2279: '3-1 Regiment Infanterie. 1946 september-1949 augustus'.

³¹⁶ Brocades Zaalberg, 'In de Oost', 148.

³¹⁷ NA, SNI 2267, '2 IBG', 'Dagelijks operatief rapport', 16-11-1947.

³¹⁸ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5461, 'Hoogstraten', 15-11-1947.



Map 6 The punitive action on 15 November 1947, drawn by Lieutenant B. Hoogstraten in his diary. I Thijs perished, II Roem perished, III Canal.³¹⁹

Hoogstraten's reporting of the case does not differ much from that in the daily operational report except for the fact that the official reports only euphemistically speak about 'punishing' where Hoogstraten was more specific, mentioning burning down the *kampongs*. Thus these *kampongs* were collectively punished for harbouring and helping a gang that attacked a Dutch patrol and killed Dutch officers. Apparently the Dutch felt these were just measures as they explicitly mentioned in the operational reports that they were intended as punishment.

3rd Infantry Brigade Group

Three men served in different battalions that fell under the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group which had its headquarters in Garoet. J.H.G. Kootker (rank unknown) who served in battalion 3 RS (*Regiment Stoottroepen*) (Regiment Shock Troops) that acted in the section Garoet wrote on 24 September 1947:

'Before our retreat I ordered two *kampong* houses to be burned down on request, because we were told they were used as a lookout.'³²⁰

³¹⁹ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5461, 'Hoogstraten', 15-11-1947.

³²⁰ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Sweep, toegang 545, inv. nr. 597: 'Dagboek J.G.H. Kootker', 24-9-1947.

This case is not reported in the operational orders of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group, but on the same day a patrol was sent out to assist engineers that had asked for reinforcement. When the patrol was fired upon from a *kampong*, they returned fire and afterwards set the *kampong* aflame.³²¹

Major C.J.J. van de Heijden of 3-14 RI is the highest in rank out of the nine authors researched here.³²² After the war, Van de Heijden bragged that the opponent had not dared to attack any units of his battalion because of their ‘ruthless actions against any form of resistance’.³²³ In his diary he reports a total of at least seven counts of arson and destruction by Dutch troops, which caused large scale damage especially during two larger actions, *Actie Limburg* and *Actie Buffel*. Of both actions the operational orders and results are still present in the archives.

Actie Limburg started on 23 November 1947 and lasted for over a week, it was a large combined action with troops from four different battalions. It involved troops at a strength of four companies and was supported by heavy weapons and subsidiary material and personnel. The goal was to clear an enemy concentration near Boenboelan and Tjibeureum about 50 kilometres southwest of Garoet. In the operational order nothing is explicitly written about the destruction of property.³²⁴ Van de Heijden was appointed as an ‘action leader’, commanding four infantry platoons from 3-14 RI together with a mortar section and a Vickers (machine gun) section. The officers first travelled by jeep and later on horseback. When they reached the first enemy fortifications they used air support and while advancing cleared many resistance dens that were defended by opponents with rifles and sten guns.³²⁵ On the 25th Van de Heijden wrote in his diary:

‘Today we started the purge of the Nangkaroeke-plain. Lt. Schröder [platooncommander] purged the area until Sawahbera in S[outh] direction and destroyed all *kampongs* in the area. Lt. Leentjes did the same in SE direction until 911605³²⁶. Cornet Engelbert took the area E until Narongtong, Lt. van der

³²¹ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2295: ‘Staf 3 Infanteriebrigadegroep, 1947 januari 18-1948 april 29’, ‘Dagelijks operatief rapport’, 24-09-1947.

³²² Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 696; Brocades Zaalberg, ‘Civil and military’, 75.

³²³ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 696.

³²⁴ NA SNI 2295, ‘3 IBG’, ‘Operatie bevel no 26 (Actie “Limburg”)', 14-11-1947.

³²⁵ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Losse stukken, toegang 057, inv. nr. 5179: ‘Dagboek C.J.J. van de Heijden’, 24-11-1947.

³²⁶ Often *kampongs* were only indicated with numbers in military reports.

Wildt took the N area. (...) The area was deserted both by the enemy and the inhabitants. All *kampongs* except for Nangkaroea were destroyed.³²⁷

Resupplied by air they started with the purge of the Boenboelan-plain on 28 November:

‘The order was given [by Van de Heijden] to burn down all houses where ammunition was found, this amounted to about ten houses surrounding the city that were lit up.’³²⁸

Major Koster lead another action to nearby Depok and also burned down every house corresponding with Van de Heijden’s orders.³²⁹ In the ‘daily operational reports’ of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group several updates on the action are given concerning enemy engagement and their subsequent flight, but nothing is written on Dutch arson and destruction.³³⁰ Eventually all enemies were driven off the plain and a local *wedana* (district leader) and five *loerah*’s (village chiefs) that reported to major Van de Heijden were given strict conditions for cooperation. He ordered them to register all strangers, introduce a pass-system and keep a curfew. If there were to be anymore ‘subversive actions’ this would lead to collective punishment against the population.³³¹ These measures by themselves prove that the area was not completely deserted, but that the civilian population had probably fled rather than face the advancing Dutch army. They were hoping to return afterwards, only to find that entire villages had been turned to ashes.

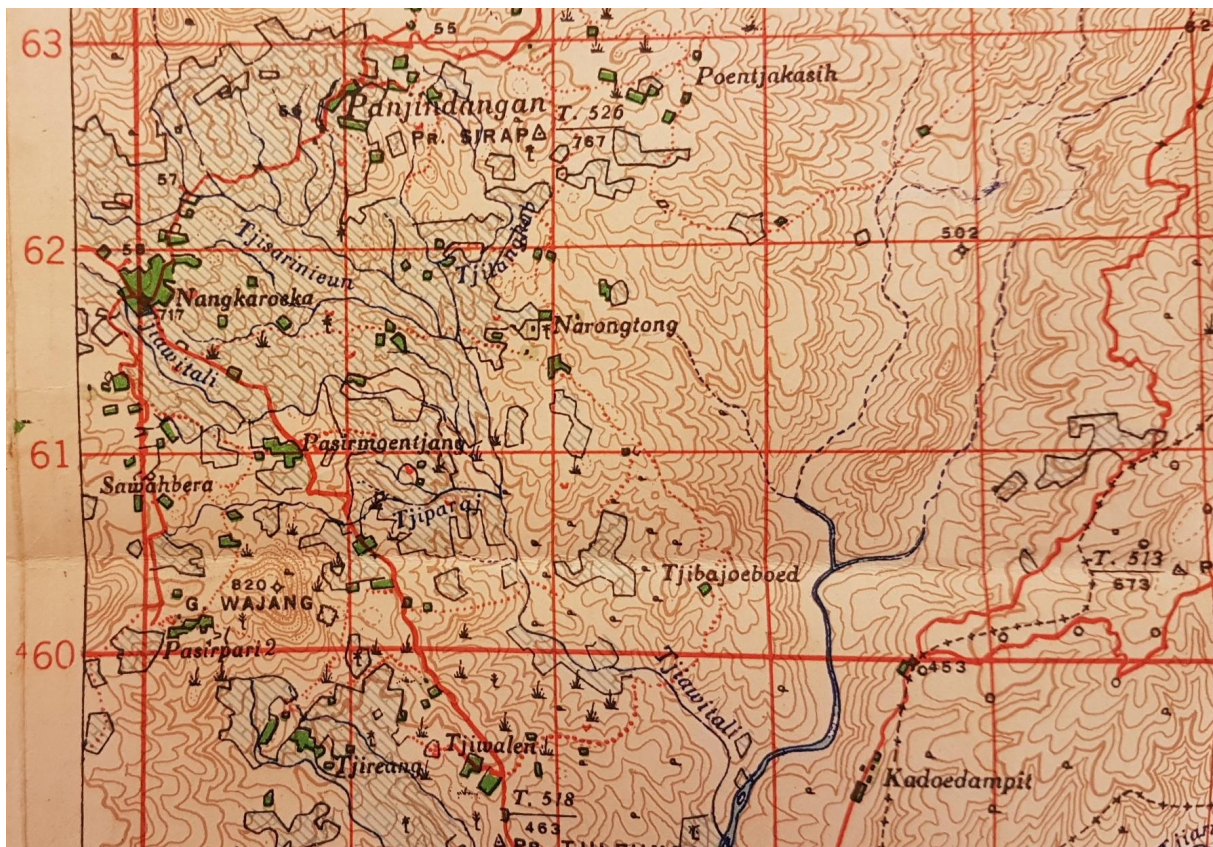
³²⁷ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5179: ‘Van de Heijden’, 25-11-1947.

³²⁸ Ibidem, 28-11-1947.

³²⁹ Ibidem.

³³⁰ NA SNI 2295, ‘3 IBG’, ‘Dagelijks operatief rapport’, 23-11, 24-11, 29-11, 30-11-1947.

³³¹ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5179: ‘Van de Heijden’, 30-11-1947.; Brocades Zaalberg, ‘Civil military’, 75.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 696.



Map 7 Tjikadjang zoomed in on the Nangkaroeka-plain on which *Actie Limburg* took place in November 1947. This is a 1943 reprint by the Army Map Service, U.S. Army, Washington D.C. from a Dutch map dated 1925, from the archive of the Staff of the Dutch W-Brigade. Original scale 1: 50.000.³³²

A month later an order was drafted for *Actie Buffel*, like the previous order it was signed by colonel H.M.G.J. Lentz the commander of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group. The action force was composed of troops from four battalions and had a combined strength of over three companies. This time in the order a ‘pioneer platoon’ was described as consisting of two ‘destruction squads’. The goal of the action was to sweep a large area around a convoy-road between Garut and Tasikmalaja. The area was bordered by two *kali*’s (rivers) and all bridges over these rivers had to be destroyed, except for one. According to the order ‘all houses in the area where weapons or ammunition were to be found had to be destroyed’.³³³ The action started on 6 January 1948 and on the first day Van de Heijden reports in his diary how a platoon destroyed several houses where weapons and ammunition were found.³³⁴ On January

³³² Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 3127: ‘Staf van de W-Brigade, 1946-1950, Topografische kaarten van Midden- en West-Java.’

³³³ NA, SNI 2295, ‘3 IBG’, ‘Bevel voor meerdaagse patrouille No. 29 “Buffel”’, 31-12-1947.

³³⁴ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5179: ‘Van de Heijden’, 6-1-1948.

7 he reports the burning of *kampong* Tjibodas 2, Tjipari 2 and all *kampongs* south of the *kali* Tjimawatu that were enemy bases according to Van de Heijden. Six more *kampongs* were destroyed as reprisal when the Dutch found houses where ammunition was stored.³³⁵ After a brief pause the action continued on the 9th and again Van de Heijden reports how they torched some enemy shelters.³³⁶ Here for the first time the official report speaks of destruction on a large scale as well:

The *kampongs* [nine *kampongs* only indicated with numbers] destroyed for being enemy resistance-pockets, as well as several houses along the road that were used by the enemy to ambush the convoy-road.³³⁷

On the 10th Van de Heijden ordered the destruction of another empty *kampong* because it ‘had been occupied by the *Tentara* (TNI)’, grenades and possibly a mine exploded in the fire.³³⁸ The action continued until the thirteenth and on the last day Van de Heijden refrained from burning down the ‘eligible houses on request of the commander of the patrol-area’.³³⁹ For *Actie Buffel* destruction is actually recorded in the official orders while burning down *kampongs* is also recorded in the official operational reports. The large scale destruction reported by Van de Heijden in his diary and the official reports combined amount to at least twenty *kampongs* that were destroyed in their entirety during this one action.

On the 23rd of July 1948 another case was reported by Van de Heijden that resembles the Multatuli quote at the start of the first chapter:

‘*Kampong* Bantarpenoederaj went up in flames after it was visited by the patrol.’³⁴⁰

In the daily operational orders of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group it is reported that an enemy *markas* was destroyed by a patrol in the section of 3-14 RI on that particular day.³⁴¹ In the war-diary of battalion 3-14 RI it is reported that during the action on the 23rd some abandoned *kampongs* were searched. Edged and bladed weapons, shell casings and red-white

³³⁵ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5179: ‘Van de Heijden’, 7-1-1948.

³³⁶ Ibidem, 9-1-1948.

³³⁷ NA, SNI 2295, ‘3 IBG’, ‘Dagelijks operatief rapport’, 10-1-1948.

³³⁸ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5179: ‘Van de Heijden’, 10-1-1948.

³³⁹ Ibidem, 13-1-1948.

³⁴⁰ Ibidem, 23-7-1948.

³⁴¹ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2296: ‘Staf 3 Infanteriebrigadegroep, 1948 mei 1-augustus 31’, ‘Dagelijks operatief rapport’, 24-7-1948 .

(Republic of Indonesia) flags were found and all houses that looked like *markasses* were turned to ashes. Thus it is likely that one and the same case is recorded in all three sources. Also according to the war-diary of the battalion, a couple of days earlier on the 20th, homes were burned down because ammunition was found, another *kampong* went up in flames on the 25th and another *markas* was destroyed on the 27th.³⁴² It is recorded in the reports of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group that in the section of another battalion a ‘large number of *markasses*, outposts and shelters were destroyed on the 25th’.³⁴³

On the 13th of September 1948 another *kampong* largely burned down according to Van de Heijden, although not by the Dutch. A blind man carrying a torch walked into a house and thus started a fire that was extinguished by a Dutch patrol.³⁴⁴ On 28th of February 1949 Van de Heijden reports how a patrol burned down a *kampong* completely as it was being used as a *markas*.³⁴⁵ Both in the daily operational reports of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group as in the war-diary of 3-14 RI arson by Dutch troops is reported on the 28th. Furthermore arson and destruction are commonplace on the pages surrounding this date in the official reports.³⁴⁶ Next to the deaths through normal enemy contact in this period there are several reports of prisoners that were shot ‘while trying to run away’ in the war-diary.³⁴⁷ In reality these attempts to flee are unlikely to have occurred, as this was one of the standard euphemisms for the murder of prisoners used by Dutch troops in patrol-reports.³⁴⁸

Private H.W. Hettema’s 3-8 RI diary stands out because of its style, this album filled with photos of *baboe’s* and *riksa’s* closely resembles a travel journal. Embedded in fishing trips and cinematic experiences he writes in February 1948:

‘This morning I went along to destroy a *passer* (marketplace). The population was given some time to take away their belongings, afterwards we shot the trash up.’³⁴⁹

³⁴² Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2321: ‘3-14 Regiment Infanterie. 1946 september 1-1949 september 21’, 20-7-1948 - 27-7-1948.

³⁴³ NA, SNI 2296, ‘3 IBG’, ‘Dagelijks operatief rapport’, 26-7-1948.

³⁴⁴ NA, SNI 2321, ‘3-14 RI’, 16-9-1948.

³⁴⁵ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5179: ‘Van de Heijden’, 28-2-1949.

³⁴⁶ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2298: ‘Staf 3 Infanteriebrigadegroep, 1949 januari-mei 31’, ‘Dagelijks operatief rapport’, 28-2, 2-3, 4-3 1949.; NA, SNI 2321, ‘3-14 RI’, 24-2, 28-2, 2-3, 4-3, 10-3, 14-3-1949.

³⁴⁷ NA, SNI 2321, ‘3-14 RI’, 2-3, 4-3-1949.

³⁴⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 581.

³⁴⁹ Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag, Losse stukken, toegang 057, inv. nr. 5354: ‘Dagboek H.W. Hettema’, 21-2-1948.



Image 11 From the diary of private H.W. Hetteema to show what 'ordinary' *kampong* houses looked like on Java, December 1948.³⁵⁰

On December 6 1948 Hetteema was on another patrol from Sindangsari to *kampong* Tjikareo that was marked as a *markas* that had to be 'cleared out'. They patrolled the surroundings, came under fire from the enemy once and left after they set the *kampong* on fire. Afterwards Hetteema was too tired to go the traditional Dutch *Sint Nicolaas* celebration.³⁵¹ The first case is untraceable in the official reports while the second is described, albeit only the fact that they had an encounter with the enemy, leaving out the burning that resulted as a reprisal.³⁵² In December 1948 reports of destruction of *markasses*, as well as the shooting of prisoners that

³⁵⁰ NIMH, Losse stukken, 057, inv. 5354: 'Hetteema', December 1948.

³⁵¹ Ibidem, 6-12-1948.

³⁵² Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 3260: '3 Bataljon 8 Regiment Infanterie (3-8 RI). 1946-1949'; NA, SNI 2295, '3 IBG'; Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.13.132, inventarisnummer 2297: 'Staf 3 Infanteriebrigadegroep, 1948 september 1-december 31', 'Dagelijks operatief rapport', 11-12-1948.

were ‘trying to run’ are widespread in the daily operational reports of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group.³⁵³

The archival records show that the scale of arson and destruction by Dutch troops in this section, both of battalion 3-14 RI as of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group in general, was even far greater than reported by Van de Heijden. Limpach states in his book that 3-14 RI waged a campaign of terror.³⁵⁴ It seems that this was not 3-14 RI by itself but that other battalions in this area of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Group were also involved.

Based on both the diaries and the official records combined the Indonesian word *markas* was the term the Dutch military used for every place the enemy used for ambushes, eating, meetings, sleeping and storage. Although it could be intended to conceal destroying houses and *kampongs*, it also appears to be the ‘fashionable’ term among Dutch soldiers that everyone involved probably understood. Van Doorn & Hendrix used the term *markas* throughout their 1970 book and its later versions, but they were former KL soldiers themselves and do not offer any explanation for the term. They state that *markas*-fires were a regular part of sweeps and purges but the targets were usually completely random houses.³⁵⁵ In the newer Dutch historical literature the term *markas* has found no traction, in the most recent and probably most widespread books by Limpach and Oostindie it has not been used once.³⁵⁶

³⁵³ NA, SNI 2297, ‘3 IBG’, ‘Dagelijks Operatief Rapport’, 6-12, 7-12, 9-12-1948.

³⁵⁴ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 697.

³⁵⁵ Doorn, van en Hendrix, *Ontsporing*, 209, 236, 303-322.

³⁵⁶ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*.; Oostindie, *Soldaat*.

Conclusion

Based on the diaries and the official records there was indeed a difference in how regular arson was used as a tactic by different battalions and brigades within the same division. Overall, whether arson was incidental, structural or systematic, varies between structural and systematic. There is only enough evidence to establish with certainty that within parts of the Third Infantry Brigade Group arson was systematic. Between November 1947 to March 1949 during multiple actions arson was part of a deliberate strategy, followed a regular system and was ordered by field officers, a major and even in signed orders by the highest regional authority colonel Lentz. In the other two brigades, although it regularly reappeared, there are no orders in the official records that explicitly mention arson. Thus, although it might have been systematic as well, further research into the official records would be necessary to prove this.

The motivation for arson that is most openly present in the official records is that ‘all houses where weapons or ammunition were to be found had to be destroyed’. In practice anything that indicated that the enemy could have resided in a certain house or *kampong* was often sufficient reason to brand it a *markas* that had to be burned down. This was definitely the dominant motive for arson in West-Java. It certainly appears as if the selection methods of the Dutch military were rather inaccurate and unfocused, causing the destruction of many houses that were probably still inhabited by civilians. Other motivations for arson provided are taking revenge and setting an example by collectively targeting the civilian population to punish them if they had assisted the resistance and deter them from assisting the resistance in the future. Although in the official record it is sometimes also mentioned that these actions were taken to punish the population, arson is only explicitly mentioned in the personal diaries of the soldiers involved. These are also the cases where soldiers often are most critical of their own methods, even comparing them to those of the Nazi’s.

Finally the diaries have indeed proven to be a valuable ‘entrance point’ to start research into the official records. All cases reported in this chapter amount to at least forty *kampongs* that were completely or largely destroyed by Dutch troops of the *Koninklijke Landmacht* in West-Java. Thus it would not be surprising if quantitative research in the records of certain units where it was widespread would amount to hundreds and maybe even thousands of *kampongs* that were partially or completely burned down by Dutch troops in West-Java.

Chapter 4 Arson in the Riouw Residency (1949)

'Everywhere where Chinese or Indonesian houses are burned down by Indonesian parties, as a countermeasure the Dutch will burn complete villages.' According to lieutenant-colonel H. Sjouke (KNIL) the text of a note pinned to a tree on orders by resident J. Van Waardenburg.³⁵⁷

Was it the result of military necessity or intended as a punitive action? This was the question the High Representative of the Crown (HVK) Louis Beel was most interested in when he requested army commander Spoor to start an investigation into a case of arson by Dutch troops.³⁵⁸ In February 1949 in the *kampong* Soengei Loear, Riouw (Riau) residency, two hundred wooden houses were burned down by KNIL troops. The case came to the attention of the authorities in Batavia when an assistant-resident of the Riouw residency M.D. Voors, wrote that the *kampong* was burned down on orders of the military commander while the mosque was spared on request of the resident. The military officers involved provided a different version of events, and this led to one of the few internal investigations into a case of arson by the Dutch military. This investigation is also reported on in the *'Excessennota'* and the work of Limpach.³⁵⁹ Although there are different versions, at some point during the action it was decided to switch from burning those houses that held subversive materials to burning the entire *kampong* except for the mosque. Thus here a decision between selective and indiscriminate burning was made. How do various Dutch civil and military authorities differentiate between military necessity and punitive actions, and what did these authorities consider sufficient grounds to resort to either selective or indiscriminate actions?

The investigation into this case reveals significant information about what the civil and military authorities felt were sufficient reasons for arson. While pleading their respective cases there are several factors they (unintentionally) reveal. At the same time it also becomes clear when they thought it was wrong to resort to arson. The investigation was quite extensive, several officers were heard and multiple civil servants gave their point of view. Finally, to strengthen his arguments the resident included other reports of arson in Bengkalis,

³⁵⁷ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'De secretaris van Staat voor binnenlandse zaken H. van der Wal aan de Territoriaal Bestuurs Adviseur van Riouw, 25-4-1949', 'Bijgevoegde telegram van Troepencdt Riouw', onbekend.

³⁵⁸ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Procureur-Generaal bij het Hooggerechtshof van Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.10.17, inventarisnummer 1326: 'Afbranden van huizen te Sungei Luar door Nederlandse militairen', 'De wd. Algemeen Secretaris E.O. van Boetzelaar aan de Legercommandant, Batavia 25-3-1949.

³⁵⁹ Bank, *Excessennota*, 101.; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 433.

an island just off the coast which also fell under the Riau residency. According to the resident the burnings there showed that it was actually quite a common practice to burn as a punitive measure for the military since arriving in these territories.³⁶⁰ Like in the other chapters, this one will have a brief sketch of the situation in the Riouw residency, but it first starts with the use and abuse of the concept of ‘military necessity’ and the function of ‘exemplary violence’.



Map 8 Sumatra 1945-1950.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘De Resident van Riouw dr. J. van Waardenburg aan de secretaris van Staat, mr. P. Bollen, 3-5-1949, Tandjoeng Pinang.

³⁶¹ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 64-65.

Military necessity

The ‘necessities of war’ also known as ‘military necessity’ means that when military logic demands that when a situation inherently necessitates action and ‘forces’ commanders to ignore the laws of war, this is permitted.³⁶² A definition by American political scientist Ron Hassner is as follows:

‘The term ‘military necessity’ is most commonly employed in situations in which security considerations are said to trump ethical restraints on the conduct of war. The claim of military necessity is usually invoked when an actor defies the principles of just-war theory, such as a state claiming that extreme military circumstances have forced it to abandon the principles of discrimination or minimum force’.³⁶³

In an article on the laws of war political scientists Paul Kennedy and George J. Andreopoulos argue that both exemplary violence and military necessity can be used to justify indiscriminate violence against non-combatants. They call these justifications ‘as traditional as warfare itself’, and argue they are paradoxical and subjective.³⁶⁴ As seen throughout this thesis punitive actions were often meant to set an example, so the arguments they use are also applicable here. According to Kennedy and Andreopoulos exemplary violence can be used to hurt the opponent so bad, that they are induced to surrender out of fear of further punishment. However, indiscriminate violence also often leads to an escalation of atrocities. Concerning military necessity they argue that this is concept is so ‘inherently subjective’, that it is perhaps the biggest challenge when trying to live up to humanitarian norms in warfare. If the position of an army is precarious commanders can invoke grounds of military necessity when committing particularly harsh acts against their opponent. It can also be used by commanders in the field when resorting to actions of dubious legality that can potentially save their soldiers’ lives.³⁶⁵ Whether an appeal to military necessity was justified is also very hard to interpret, especially in case of sources of dubious reliability.³⁶⁶ In a guerrilla war lower commanders usually had a lot more discretion to make their own decisions. Contrary to the case in this chapter most of the time there were no high ranking civil servants or officers

³⁶² Walter, *Colonial violence*, 163.

³⁶³ R. E. Hassner, ‘military necessity’, Britannica Academic <<https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/levels/collegiate/article/military-necessity/600973> > visited on 24-09-2019.

³⁶⁴ Kennedy and Andreopoulos, ‘Laws of war’, 217.

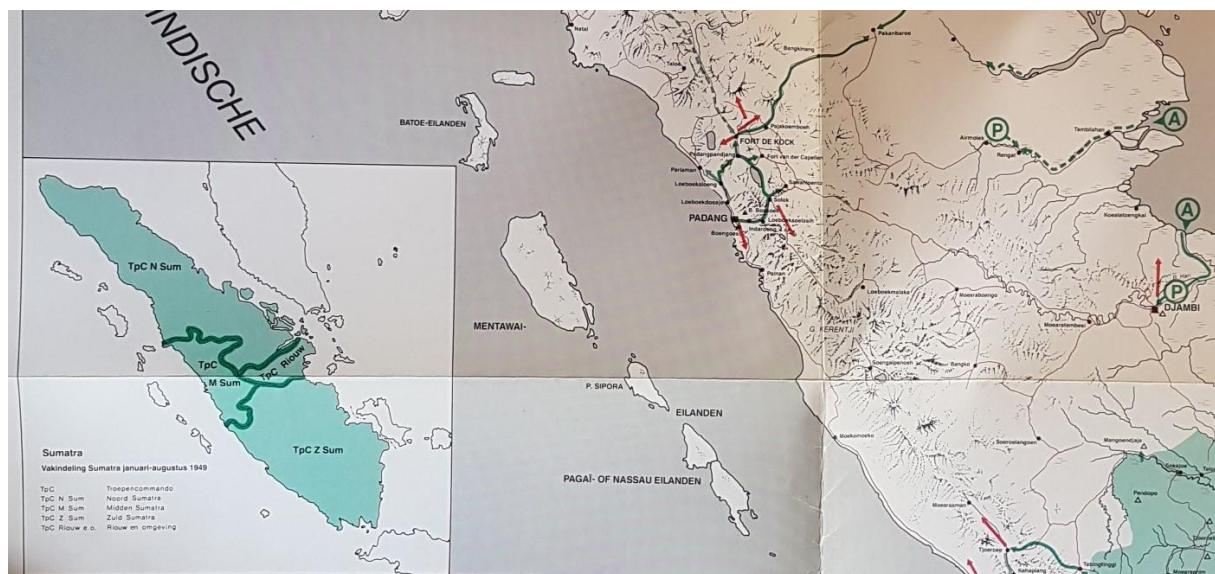
³⁶⁵ Ibidem, 218.

³⁶⁶ Walter, *Colonial violence*, 163.

present at their actions so they knew that there was relatively little chance of prosecution when they resorted to forms of ‘disruptive’ or ‘extreme’ violence’.³⁶⁷

Riouw Residency

During the second ‘Police Action’ (19-12-1948 until 5-1-1949) the Dutch occupied large parts of Sumatra, next to the Republican territories on Java.³⁶⁸ For the 22.500 Dutch land forces on Sumatra this was a large extension of their territorial presence which before had been limited to the plantation-belt around Medan in the northeast and the region around Palembang including the isles of Bangka and Bilitong in the South.³⁶⁹ One of the objectives of ‘Operatie Kraai’ (Operation Crow), as the action was officially called, was the taking of Fort de Kock in Central-Sumatra, the military headquarters of the TNI.³⁷⁰ As can be seen on the map the Central-Sumatra region is on the west side of the island, while the Riouw residency is on the east side.



Map 9 TPC Riau, Sumatra during the second ‘Police Action’. A to P inland (east-west) is the Indragiri river. In the cut-out on the left the territorial divisions.³⁷¹

At the end of December general Spoor added the occupation of two key-positions around Lampong and Indragiri, which according to the operational plans had only been

³⁶⁷ R.P. Budding, R.P., *Beheersing van geweld. Het optreden van de Nederlandse landstrijdkrachten in Indonesië 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 1996) 49.

³⁶⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 57.

³⁶⁹ Cribb, *Atlas*, 161.; The 22.500 men consisted of 16.200 KL, and 6.300 KNIL of which in total 82 % was operational. Via: Groen, *Marsroutes*, 176.

³⁷⁰ Groen, *Marsroutes*, 188.

³⁷¹ *Ibidem*, Maps.

optional. This was done to strengthen their position and leave the TNI as little room to regroup as possible. On January 4 1949 The Royal Navy sailed up the Indragiri river near Tembilahan and the next day paratroopers occupied the undamaged oil-installations at Airmolek and the city of Rengat during *Operatie Modder* (Operation Mud). These actions found little resistance and according to Dutch reports the TNI fled disorderly. This formally ended the second ‘Police Action’ on Sumatra, but the TNI and other groups immediately resorted to guerrilla methods.³⁷²



Image 12 Dutch paratroopers in Djambi, South-Sumatra with smoke from burning oil-installations in the background probably as a result of Indonesian ‘scorched earth’ tactics.³⁷³ During the second ‘Police Action’ the ‘para’s’ were deployed three times in under three weeks. First in Djokjakarta, then in Djambi and finally in Airmolek and Rengat.³⁷⁴ Because of this severe burden, in Airmolek, and possibly also during other actions they were given ‘stimulants’; Bensedrine pills which resemble the drug speed, 30-12 1948.³⁷⁵

Army command placed the recently conquered territories under the *Territorialel tevens Troepen commando Banka-Billiton-Riouw* (Territorial and Troop Command) that included the

³⁷² Groen, *Marsroutes*, 189.

³⁷³ Dienst voor Legercontacten (DLC), NIMH Beeldbank Objectnummer: DS0003-0244, via: < <https://nimh-beeldbank.defensie.nl/> > visited on 24-09-2019.

³⁷⁴ Moor, de, *Westerling's Oorlog*, 295-343.

³⁷⁵ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 666.

areas on the Indragiri, the Riau archipelago between Sumatra and Singapore, and other islands like Pedang and Bengkalis. It was commanded by lieutenant-colonel³⁷⁶ H. Sjouke (KL), the TPC³⁷⁷.³⁷⁸ The position of *Territoriaal Bestuursadviseur* (Territorial Administration-councillor) (TBA) was created during the second Police Action when civil servants joined the army to start new civil departments in recently occupied territories. The TBA was the highest civil authority in these areas, but the new territories were governed under military authority which rested solely with the TPC and the commanders appointed by him. The military commanders had to conduct their tasks in close consultation with the TBA, and where possible they had to deliberate with them on all matters concerning the civilian population.³⁷⁹ Notwithstanding his different legal position the TBA was still often called resident, like dr. J. van Waardenburg in the case of Riouw.

Two different ethnic groups play quite a different role in this case. The Chinese were the prime victims of violence by the TNI and the Bandjarese that fought on their side. From Dutch official accounts from before the Second World War it becomes clear that the Chinese were of economic importance to the Dutch. One resident called them ‘a content and loyal category of citizens’.³⁸⁰ While the Dutch regarded the The Bandjarese, coming from modern South-Kalimantan province in Borneo, as underdeveloped colonists.³⁸¹

The Soengei Loear case

Many details about this case are disputed but everyone involved agreed that the *kampong* Soengei Loear was found almost abandoned on February 16th, 1949 and was subsequently completely burned to the ground by Dutch troops under command of captain J.E. Strijd of KNIL Inf. VII, while only the mosque was spared.³⁸² During the investigation that followed lieutenant D. Ornée of the Military Police (MP) was tasked with interrogating officers of which the reports survived. In addition there are letters by lieutenant-colonel Sjouke, and letters and reports by TBA Van Waardenburg that provide us with details on their stance

³⁷⁶ Limpach writes that Sjouke was a colonel, so perhaps he was promoted during the course of the year, but in all the archival sources he is called ‘*overste*’ Sjouke, which would make him a lieutenant-colonel. Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 660.

³⁷⁷ *Territoriaal- tevens Troepencommandant van Riouw, Bangka en Biliton*.

³⁷⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 664.

³⁷⁹ Zijlmans, *Eindstrijd*, 85.

³⁸⁰ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Koloniën: Memories van Overgave, nummer toegang 2.10.39, inventarisnummer 241: ‘Plate, L.M.F. (resident); Memorie van Overgave van de residentie Riouw’ (1924), p. 3.

³⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 55, 56.

³⁸² NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Uittreksel uit rapport Ass-res M.D. Voors, 17-2-1949.

regarding the actions.³⁸³ Civilian and military authorities provided different versions of the events and as a consequence a lot of accusations were made between the authorities.

The military commander in charge during the action in Soengei Loear was captain Strijd.³⁸⁴ Thus there is good reason to start with his statement on the case, which he delivered during an interrogation approximately three months after the events.³⁸⁵ At the start of February there had been attacks from Soengei Loear on Tembilahan where Strijd had his base. When he received intelligence that Soengei Loear was still used by enemy forces afterwards he sent out a patrol. On February 11th, platoon commander sergeant Van Wankum went there with a patrol of 34 men and when he arrived on the scene he indeed found signs of enemy presence and communist propaganda.³⁸⁶ In accordance with his orders, Van Wankum made his camp there but on the 15th Strijd sent him a telegram to abandon Soengei Loear and return to Tembilahan.³⁸⁷ TNI forces assisted by the local population, for the largest part Bandjarese, immediately swooped in and plundered the Chinese quarters, killed members of the Chinese population and set their houses on fire. Indonesian houses that had been used by the Dutch troops were also set aflame.³⁸⁸ The fires were visible from Tembilahan, which is approximately 10 kilometres away.³⁸⁹ On the 14th there had been a mass murder of around 30 Chinese civilians in the nearby village of Soengei Salak.³⁹⁰ The Dutch had clearly been unable to provide security for the Chinese civilian population in this area during what the resident would later call 'systematic terror against the Chinese population'. Although after the attacks the Dutch evacuated around 140 Chinese civilians.³⁹¹ Late the same afternoon resident Van Waardenburg arrived in Tembilahan on an inspection tour. According to Strijd he discussed the fires in Soengei Loear and the murder of forty Chinese with the resident. They agreed to go to Soengei Loear, the resident with his entourage including assistant-resident Voors and some officers, and Strijd with his detachment. Almost without discussion Strijd and the resident agreed that a severe example should be set by burning down certain houses in

³⁸³ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'De commandant MP Kol. der inf. H.EM. Bakhuis', 13-5-1949, Batavia.

³⁸⁴ *Commandant van het detachement Tembilihan, vakcommando Indragiri, ressorterende onder het Territoriaal tevens Troepen commando Banka-Billiton-Riouw.*

³⁸⁵ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Het Proces Verbaal, namens de commandant korps militaire politie, Hoofd centrale justitiele afdeling o/l de res. 1^o luitenant D. Ornee aan: de P.G.'. 28-6-1949. 'Gehoord op 21 mei 1949 Johannes Everardus Strijd', p. 5.

³⁸⁶ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Uittreksel uit het dagboek van Detachement Tembilahan over maand Februari 1949', 11-2-1949.

³⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, 15-2-1949.

³⁸⁸ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Voorblad'.

³⁸⁹ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Gehoord Strijd', p. 5.

³⁹⁰ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Dagboek Feb.', 14-2-1949.

³⁹¹ *Ibidem*, 15-2-1949.

Soengei Loear. Strijd could not remember whose idea it was, only that they had immediately agreed.³⁹²

The next day, when arriving in Soengei Loear by boat, the 24 strong detachment was split in two, one group lead by Van Wankum, who had to lock down the *kampong* on the land side, and a group led by Strijd himself that locked down the riverside.³⁹³ Strijd ordered Van Wankum to search all houses and subsequently put those houses to the torch where weapons or pamphlets were found. Van Wankum had to keep his troops together, both because of the risk of enemy gunfire, and to prevent the men from burning down houses on their own accord. With his own group Strijd followed the same method when he found some villagers hiding. He made them point out houses of leaders and ‘*boesoeke*’ (rotten, unreliable) elements and these were also burned down. This ‘intelligence’ was confirmed by propaganda materials that were found in those houses. When the resident arrived on the scene they had been doing this for the past two hours, progress had been slow and only the outskirts of town were searched. According to Strijd the resident then proclaimed they had to burn down everything, all the remaining buildings in the quarters that were already searched and the whole of Soengei Loear including chicken- and goat-dens. Only the mosque was to be spared, which the resident explained with the following statement: ‘By sparing the mosque it would show that the punitive measures were not directed at religion, and the mosque could be of use again to the BB during reconstruction’. This despite the fact that the mosque was used as a rice storage by the perpetrators of the day before, which the resident himself had concluded upon inspecting it.³⁹⁴

Officially civilian authorities had no jurisdiction over the military and during his interrogation Strijd emphasized that he had considered this at the time: ‘He would not accept orders by the resident, but he saw him as an authority of such stature that the resident would not do him erroneous propositions.’ Strijd emphasised that he himself had also felt the necessity to burn down the rest of the village. After his deliberations he had proceeded by systematically burning down the rest of Soengei Loear, with the exception of the mosque. Supposedly the resident gave the same instruction to Van Wankum, and to a group of marines that also started to burn down a part of the *kampong* that was still untouched. Afterwards lieutenant-colonel Sjouke had asked him whether it was his initiative or the residents, a

³⁹² NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Gehoord Strijd’, p. 5.

³⁹³ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Dagboek Feb.’, 16-2-1949.

³⁹⁴ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Gehoord Strijd’, p. 6.

question Strijd avoided answering. He only said ‘the resident thought it was wonderful’ and then asked his commander what he thought about it. In turn he did not receive an answer.³⁹⁵

Thus when confronted with arson and murder by the TNI and parts of the population that helped the Republican troops, the first thing that came to mind to KNIL infantry captain Strijd is selective punishment which should set a ‘severe example’. The punishment seems to be focused in the sense that Strijd initially did not intend to burn down the whole village, but only the houses where materials were found that could be linked to the resistance. In this case those were pamphlets and weapons, and when the resident asked to spare the mosque it was noted that it was used as a rice storage by the TNI-forces. So it might be that without the interference of the resident this would have been sufficient reason to put the mosque to the torch as well. When, according to Strijd, the resident told them to burn down everything, the selective punishment, turned into indiscriminate punishment. Nowhere did the captain express shock or surprise by this order, or proposition as he tried to call it, but he said he had felt this was indeed necessary.

About a month before Strijd was interrogated lieutenant-colonel Sjouke wrote it was the resident that got angry when confronted with the abandoned and already partly destroyed village of Soengei Loear. According to Sjouke the resident had told the military commander to ‘put the rest to the torch as well’, which caused the loss of ‘two hundred substantial wooden Indonesian houses’. Sjouke continued that afterwards the resident wrote a note which he had pinned to a tree: ‘Everywhere where Chinese or Indonesian houses are burned down by Indonesian parties, as a countermeasure the Dutch will burn down complete villages.’ Captain Strijd had not agreed with this threatening message and the execution of these measures, because of the damage this would do to the population; it would make ‘peace work’ impossible. Therefore similar ‘ordered arson’ did not take place afterwards. This measure was thus meant as a punitive exercise, Sjouke clarified. Because of this he protested the interpretation of the resident, he added that the resident never answered his letters, and ‘that because the resident is anti-military sincere cooperation is impossible’.³⁹⁶

Resident Van Waardenburg was appalled by the military’s version of events. However, this was not because the village went up in flames, on the necessity of this he wholeheartedly agreed, but because the military put the blame on him.³⁹⁷ According to the

³⁹⁵ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Gehoord Strijd’, p. 6.

³⁹⁶ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘De secretaris van Staat voor binnenlandse zaken H. van der Wal aan de Territoriaal Bestuurs Adviseur van Riouw, 25-4-1949’, ‘Bijgevoegde telegram van Troepenct Riouw’, onbekend.

³⁹⁷ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Van Waardenburg aan Bollen’, 3-5-1949.

enraged resident, the statements delivered by some of the other officers and non-commissioned officers involved were all quite similar and thus worthless because they were agreed on beforehand.³⁹⁸ These statements indeed all point in the direction of the resident but some details from the statement of sergeant Van Wankum are still interesting. He declared he had found edged and bladed weapons and no firearms. When asked by the resident who ordered him to put fire to the houses he had answered that according to his own opinion, it was reasonable to put the houses of arsonists to the torch. The resident had agreed and then ordered him to burn down the rest of the village, which his men did.³⁹⁹

The resident delivered multiple statements between May and July which will be examined here to describe the situation. When he arrived the military was already in the process of setting fire to the village. Immediately after he embarked, some Chinese and Indians came to him to tell the *kampong* population was completely on the side of the TNI and had helped with the burning.⁴⁰⁰ He wrote that the officers had accurately relayed his words, but had taken them out of context:

‘When one does not sit behind his desk but on-site sees what sort of destruction has taken place here; if one sees all those bodies floating down the river, the houses and *toko*’s (shops) of innocent people burned down and corpses of women and children found in the ashes, then such a resistance den, from which continuously has been attacked, must urgently be exterminated. One then calls out: ‘put everything to the torch!’ In these sort of words I have spoken to captain Strijd but only 2 hours after he was already executing his punishment c.q. strategically necessary measures.’

Later on he told his side of the story to all the officers involved including Sjouke. However, he was adamant they had portrayed it ‘out of context’, and it was just an exclamation not meant as an order.⁴⁰¹ He also said he had told Strijd to spare the mosque, to which the captain had immediately complied by instructing his non-commissioned officers.⁴⁰²

Van Waardenburg interrogated more local witnesses and concluded the *kampong* population was just as guilty of ‘local terror’ as the TNI. There was also intelligence that the TNI and ‘malignant elements’ among the population were still surrounding Soengei Loear in large numbers. Because of this he was convinced that the measures taken by the Strijd were

³⁹⁸ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 661.

³⁹⁹ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘P.V. Ornee’, ‘Verhoor van de segeant J.A.H. van Wankum’.

⁴⁰⁰ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Van Waardenburg aan Bollen’, 3-5-1949.

⁴⁰¹ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Relaas van de Resident van Riouw Dr. J. van Waardenburg’, 25-7-1949, Tandjoeng Pinang.

⁴⁰² NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Van Waardenburg aan Bollen’, 3-5-1949.

not only the right punishment, but also must be regarded as a military necessity, to prevent the rebellious population from using Soengei Loear as a resistance base directed against Tembilahan and its surroundings. Therefore he had seen no reason to object to these measures. He had also advised Strijd to leave a pamphlet for the population to explain why these measures were taken, but he did not know if Strijd followed up on this advice.⁴⁰³

Van Waardenburg was also vexed by the words of army commander Spoor who had, without a proper investigation and on the report of just one person [Sjouke] that had not even been present himself, spoken of ‘the guilty’ and a ‘loathsome incident’. To conclude Van Waardenburg wrote:

‘Even though there was no advice or order from my side, it is my opinion that there was acted out of 1. Military necessity and 2. A punitive measure. And I will insist on this even now, even though a higher authority might have a different opinion. As TBA I only advice, and if I had not agreed I would have protested.’⁴⁰⁴

It also annoyed Van Waardenburg that none of the military involved had given their opinion on whether the measures had been right or wrong.⁴⁰⁵ Captain Strijd had called it setting a severe example against all houses where subversive materials were found, and lieutenant-colonel Sjouke called it a ‘punitive exercise’. Only the resident called it the right punishment, as well as insisting on the military necessity to destroy the village so it could no longer be used as a resistance base. Spoor had indeed written about ‘the guilty’ and a ‘loathsome incident’ in a telegram in April by which he thus disapproved of the case regardless of the outcome of the investigation and in accordance with his *Dagorders*.⁴⁰⁶ However, Spoor passed away on May the 25th, probably due to a heart condition induced by the pressure of his work.⁴⁰⁷ Thus the final verdict will come from his successor as army commander, former chief of staff lieutenant-general Dirk Cornelis Buurman van Vreeden (1902-1964). Attorney general Oerip Kartodirdjo used the judgement of the resident as an ‘adequate answer’ to the question by HVK Beel that had been the start of the investigation.

⁴⁰³ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Van Waardenburg aan Bollen’, 3-5-1949.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁰⁵ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Relaas van de Resident van Riouw Dr. J. van Waardenburg’, 30-7-1949, Tandjoeng Pinang.

⁴⁰⁶ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Telegram Spoor’, 13-4-1949.

⁴⁰⁷ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 690.

He also judged the military actions were justified after reading all the files.⁴⁰⁸ Buurman van Vreeden adopted his judgement and advised that because both Sjouke and Van Waardenburg were transferred and the case had not led to difficult questions by Dutch parliament it could be deposited, which happened the next day.⁴⁰⁹ According to Limpach this, together with many other cases in his book, shows the structural unwillingness by the military leadership to conduct consistent and objective investigations into their subordinates.⁴¹⁰

To show that it was not the first time that during actions mosques and houses in his resort were put to the torch as a punitive measure, Van Waardenburg provided two earlier cases in January and February 1949, on which he had heavily protested these measures with Sjouke.⁴¹¹ These cases were brought to his attention through a complaint by the assistant-resident (PBA⁴¹²) of Bengkalis, dr. G.J.A. Veling. Since Bengkalis was occupied by Dutch troops during the second 'Police Action' there had been several accounts of houses and other buildings that were put to fire by patrol commanders as a punitive measure. Here, according to Veling, Sjouke had said that the position of the military was that 'the use of appropriate military measures was to be left to the judgement of the patrol commanders.'⁴¹³

On January 9th a mosque in *kampong* Pedidik, from which allegedly the TNI had operated, was set ablaze. A house in *kampong* Tamaran, where large quantities of *toembaks* and stakes were found, suitable to make spears, was also put to the torch. Finally the house of the *penghoeloe* (village head) in Api-Api was also burned down.⁴¹⁴ The acting commander of the infantry unit involved, lieutenant A.J. van Galen, declared that *penghoeloe* Soedjiman was involved in the murder of a Chinese and therefore as a military punitive measure his house was burned down.⁴¹⁵ The personal opinion of Veling was that these harsh military measures were sometimes used rather rashly. It was also possible the population had nothing to do with the TNI using houses and mosques. According to Veling a harsh measure like burning should

⁴⁰⁸ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Procureur-generaal mr. Oerip Kartodirdjo aan Beel. Inzake afbranden van huizen te Soengei Loear', 11-8-1949, Batavia.

⁴⁰⁹ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', Buurman van Vreeden aan Kartodirdjo, 19-8-1949, Batavia.;

NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', Advocaat-generaal J.E.K. Bondam aan Buurman van Vreeden, 20-8-1949, Batavia.

⁴¹⁰ Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 661.

⁴¹¹ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Van Waardenburg aan Bollen', 3-5-1949.

⁴¹² *Plaatselijk Bestuurs Adviseur* (Local Administration-councillor).

⁴¹³ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'De bestuursadviseur van Bengkalis Dr. G.J.A. Veling aan den Territoriaal Bestuurs Adviseur te Tandjoeng Pinang, Onderwerp: In brand steken woningen als militaire strafmaatregel', 26-1-1949, Bengakalis.

⁴¹⁴ Ibidem.

⁴¹⁵ NA, PG 1326, 'Sungei Luar', 'Cdt. Operationeel onderdeel te Bengkalis 1^e luit. Inf. A.J. van Galen', 27-1-1949.

only be used as a last resort, and then only if it is certain the guilty themselves were punished this way. In all other cases it was a measure that would not be understood by the population and not by him.⁴¹⁶ On behalf of Van Waardenburg, assistant-resident Voors had added to this:

‘That he as well disapproved of such measures, because he thought these to be more damaging than correct towards a recovery of the good relations between the population that we come to liberate and the liberators.’⁴¹⁷

Lieutenant Van Galen responded to this, in a letter headed ‘Putting houses to fire as a punitive military measure’. According to Van Galen when the Dutch troops first arrived on the isle of Bengkalis the population fought together with the TNI against Dutch troops. He thought it was a military necessity to make clear towards the population that assisting the TNI could not be tolerated. Thus ‘harsh measures’ were to be taken if said assistance was to be continued. Apparently these harsh measures were burning, as his next point was that in case of arson ‘preventive actions’ were taken by the military to make sure the fire could not spread further. If this was not possible they refrained from burning.⁴¹⁸

The next fragment Van Waardenburg added shows that such measures were not always left to the judgement of patrol commanders, but sometimes also relied on instructions from higher up. This time lieutenant Van Galen was reprimanded for not setting fire to a house’.⁴¹⁹ The territorial under commander major Van Renesse wrote that Van Galen had made a mistake by not setting fire to the house of a *penghoeloe* in *kampong* Betan Toea. It was clear the *penghoeloe* had assisted the TNI and was even guilty of propaganda. In his home articles, *djimats* (amulets) and rice for the TNI was found as mentioned by the PBA. He had personally reprimanded Van Galen for this ‘NEGLECT’^{420, 421}

⁴¹⁶ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Veling aan TBA’, 26-1-1949.

⁴¹⁷ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Van Waardenburg aan Voors’, 7-2-1949.

⁴¹⁸ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘In brand steken woningen als militaire strafmaatregel, van eerste luit. van Gaalen’, 17-2-1949.

⁴¹⁹ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Van Gaalen’, 17-2-1949.

⁴²⁰ Van Renesse’s capitals.

⁴²¹ NA, PG 1326, ‘Sungei Luar’, ‘Territoriaal ondercdt. te Pangkal Pinang Majoor van Renesse’, 24-2-1949.

Conclusion

The investigation was started because both HVK Beel and army commander Spoor officially condemned the actions. However, in the end the Attorney General judged the measures had been adequate. This stance was adopted by the new army commander Buurman van Vreeden and the case was dropped due in part because it had not attracted any attention in Dutch parliament. In the Riau Residency, the highest military commander, ranking lieutenant-colonel with a function as territorial commander over a large territory in Sumatra, left 'the use of appropriate measures to the judgement of the platoon commanders'. This of course does not tell us whether he gave his subordinates other more explicit orders in person or through his lower commanders, but he definitely did not forbid arson or other punitive measures against the population. The next in rank, a major with a function as territorial under-commander, reprimanded one of his subordinates for not setting fire to a house. This may imply there were actually standing orders to burn down the houses of certain people that were suspect of assisting the TNI. This leads to the conclusion that arson here was a structural part of Dutch operations. There are also indications that it might have been systematic, but those responsible were actively trying to disguise this, which makes definitively concluding this hard.

The company and platoon commanders provide the motivations for arson in this case. Assisting the TNI and possession of weapons and other subversive materials were considered as legitimate reasons for putting houses to the torch with the aim of setting a severe example. While punitive military measures were considered as a military necessity to make clear towards the population that assisting the TNI could not be tolerated. Thus both collective and selective punishment were deemed necessary by the commanders in the field that could officially make the judgement, to make clear towards the population that they had to stop fighting alongside the TNI.

In the Soengei Loear case none of the officers called it military necessity, but based on what the resident wrote, a civil servant, the authorities in Batavia eventually decided it was. The resident did agree with the punitive measures in the case of Soengei Loear, but he and the assistant-residents did not want them to be used lightly because it could damage their relationship with the population. This was also the reason why he wanted to spare the mosque. Thus his arguments for restraining arson were not based on humanitarian grounds but on the problems this would cause for the future establishing of a Dutch civil administration.

Conclusion

Most academic literature that specifically analyses burning and destruction by colonial forces deals with ‘scorched earth’ campaigns around the turn of the nineteenth century. Although it has been argued that the destruction of houses and complete settlements was also a regular part of most other imperial wars, this is often only mentioned among other tactics in the literature. The same can be said for the Dutch scholarly debate that deals with the Dutch-Indonesian war of 1945-1949. Burning and destruction by the Dutch armed forces is a recurring theme but it is not specifically analysed or theorised on. Therefore throughout this thesis the main research question has been: What form of violence is arson, to what extent was arson structural, and what were the various motivations for the Dutch military for the burning of habitation during the Dutch-Indonesian war 1945-1949?

This way the research question analytically distinguishes between three concepts that are interconnected and gradually become more specific. In the Dutch academic literature on the decolonization war different generic terms have been used for violence that transgresses the laws of war, such as ‘excessive violence’, ‘extreme violence’, ‘mass violence’ and ‘war crimes’. Arson is usually considered as a ‘category’ or ‘form’ of ‘excessive violence’, together with other ‘forms’ such as executions, murder and torture. Therefore based on ideas by Karl Hack in this thesis the alternative concept of ‘disruptive violence’ is introduced to distinguish arson and other forms of violence that have significant negative impacts on peoples’ lives, but fall short of obvious direct bodily harm, from those that do cause direct bodily harm. Arson (or burning and destruction), together with detention without trial, and forced relocation have significant negative impacts on the freedom and/or livelihood of the civilian population and together fall under ‘disruptive violence’.

Whether arson was incidental, structural, or systematic is also disputed in the literature. Most authors agree that it was structural, but they argue it is hard to find in official reports, while Limpach argues it was structural and in some cases also systematic. When it comes to motivations different articles and books complement each other more than they differ. In general arson is often either considered as a deterrent or a reprisal or was used for reasons of ‘military necessity’.

In the first chapter the ‘genealogy’ of arson and its restraints are discussed, ending with the theoretical restraints on arson during the war of decolonization. Based on the army manual the VPTL and *Dagorders* by general Spoor destruction of property was prohibited.

However, army command never set up any control systems, nor did Spoor impose disciplinary or judicial consequences to his orders. Destruction of property was officially allowed according to the 'State of War and Siege' when property 'interfered with the execution of military measures', but this law also reads that the military authorities should pay compensation for property that they destroyed. In practice this article was never invoked in the context of civilian habitation, probably because few people were aware of these articles and many Indonesian people had little access to courts in general.

Chapters 2-4 deal with various different regions spread out over the Indonesian Archipelago; Zuid-Celebes, West-Java and East-Sumatra, and respectively different sections of the army; the DST (and the KNIL), the KL and the KNIL. Even though this way the various sections of the Dutch armed forces are treated and can be compared, this cannot be considered as representative for the Dutch armed forces as a whole. It must be taken into account that only 25 percent of the Dutch armed forces was active in the field and thus the largest part of all military personnel probably never witnessed any acts of burning and destruction. In addition out those that were active the areas and units researched for this thesis are deliberately selected because of indications that arson was widespread within them. Whether arson was structural and what the motivations for arson where will be discussed per chapter before coming to a final conclusion.

According to the first operational orders of the Zuid-Celebes affair written by captain Westerling 'all houses where firearms were found were to be put to the torch.' From later interrogations of Westerling the discovery of weapons in general had become sufficient grounds to burn down entire *kampongs*. While non-cooperation and hiding 'bad elements' were also considered sufficient reason for burning down a *kampong* by Westerling. Westerling had free reign to act on his own accord and was locally only accountable to colonel De Vries, the highest Dutch commander in the 'Outer Islands'. When De Vries was interrogated in June 1949 he explicitly stated that arson was permitted during the actions. The motivations he gave were: the presence of weapons and ammunition, habitation or other use by 'terrorists' and firing at Dutch troops from houses. In the last case he added that arson was often used a means to set a terrifying example. Although this still does not tell us if he gave the direct order, he certainly condoned it. Together this can lead to the conclusion that burning down civilian property was a systematic part of the actions of the DST in Zuid-Celebes. It targeted both the insurgents to deprive them of support and shelter as well as the civilian population to deter them from assisting the opponent. According to Indonesian sources many valuables were also stolen during the actions, which would make burning to disguise looting

another motive for arson. Combined the actions caused the destruction of at least 500-1000 houses during a period of a little over two months, but it might as well have been many more considering the gaps in the available information and when including the actions of regular KNIL forces.

Based on the diaries of KL soldiers 28 out of the 34 cases of arson reported on in West-Java in the NIMH database have been tracked down in the official records of the 1st Division '7 December' (KL). Although not all cases from the diaries were traceable in the official records, many more cases of burning and destruction were found in the official reports of some units, while others are silent on the subject. Arson was a structural part of patrols and actions by the *7 December Divisie* as a whole. Arson regularly reappeared but it is not always clear if this was done on orders from higher up or on the own initiative of platoon commanders. Only in case of the Third Infantry Brigade Group arson it can be concluded that arson was systematically used within this brigade. During several actions the orders were explicitly given that 'all houses where weapons or ammunition were to be found had to be destroyed'. Like during the Zuid-Celebes affair this was considered the most certain form of 'proof' of resistance. The Indonesian word *markas* was widespread among the men of the KL to designate 'enemy camps'; it was used to indicate that houses in a *kampong* were used by the enemy. This was the dominant motive for the destruction of houses and although the selection methods were often questionable this was primarily aimed at the opponent. Other motivations for arson in the diaries are taking revenge and setting an example by collectively punishing the civilian population to deter them from assisting the resistance. These incidents are either untraceable in the official records, or when they are, and punishment is also explicitly mentioned, arson is not. When intended as punishment towards the population soldiers are often critical towards their own methods, even comparing them to those of Nazi Germany, while burning down *markasses* was often considered a routine job. The incidents discussed in this chapter amount to at least forty *kampongs* that were destroyed by KL troops, but this probably is still only the tip of the iceberg and quantitative research could lead to evidence that hundreds and maybe even thousands of *kampongs* were partially or completely burned down by Dutch troops in West-Java.

Before the investigation into the Soengei Loear case in 1949 general Spoor, in line with the VPTL and his *Dagorders*, spoke of a 'loathsome incident' and 'the guilty' in a case of arson before it was even clear what had exactly happened. Thus either the army commander Spoor was ignorant and uninformed about the tactics his men used during the course of the war, or he deliberately took the position of righteous indignation trying to

mislead the outside world. The latter was definitely also the position lieutenant-colonel Sjouke took in the Soengei Loear case while he was trying to frame the resident. In favour of burning down the village, the resident proved to be an easy scapegoat, but the additional materials the resident provided in his defence also lend credibility to his stance that it was business as usual for the KNIL troops to resort to arson. Territorial and Troop commander lieutenant-colonel Sjouke officially left 'the use of appropriate measures to the judgement of the platoon commanders', by which he did not forbid arson. His subordinate major Van Renesse, a territorial under-commander, reprimanded one of his subordinates for not setting fire to a house when he considered this necessary to punish a local dignitary that had worked with the TNI. This implies that these field officers provided their platoon commanders with more instructions than they were willing to admit to. Here arson was structural while a case can probably be made for systematic. Here the officers, again, declared that finding weapons or propaganda was considered as sufficient reason for burning down houses used by the enemy. According to the resident the houses were burned down as a punitive measure towards the population because they assisted the TNI, while he also considered it military necessity to deter the population from assisting the TNI in the future.

Combining the motivations for arson provided throughout the chapters it comes to the following list:

1. To deprive the insurgents of shelter.
2. Weapons, ammunition, propaganda or other subversive materials found in houses.
3. To take revenge and/or set an example if Dutch troops had been fired upon.
4. To take revenge and/or set an example when the population had supported the opponent or not informed the Dutch.
5. To deter the population from assisting the opponent.
6. 'Military necessity'.
7. Burning to disguise looting.

The list is in no particular order and often motives had considerable overlap, but two dominant motivations for arson can be determined based on the sources used for this thesis. Which are the destruction of *markasses* to deprive the insurgents of shelter. and the discovery of weapons and ammunition because these could potentially be used for resistance activities.

Throughout the Indonesia archipelago the Dutch armed forces destroyed many houses and *kampongs* and sometimes also food storages if they believed that these were linked to the resistance. However, there are no signs in the sources used for this thesis that crops and

livestock were also destroyed. Thus the Dutch did not resort to 'scorched earth' strategies like in conflicts such as the Aceh-war and the Boer-war where all means of livelihood were destroyed. In this thesis arson is classified as a form of disruptive violence, to distinguish arson from forms of violence that cause direct bodily harm. Although there were theoretical restraints on arson in practice these do not appear to have played much of a role among the men, nor among the cadre. Military leadership was structurally unwilling to conduct consistent and objective investigations into their subordinates despite the prohibitions. Among KNIL and KL troops discussed in this thesis arson was a structural part of Dutch military actions. While it can be considered systematic among the DST and also among parts of the KL, even based on explicit orders by colonels with jurisdiction over large territories and thousands of troops. The dominant motivations for arson were the destruction of *markasses* to deprive the insurgents of shelter and the discovery of weapons and ammunition because this could indicate possible resistance.

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Glossary: Abbreviations and foreign terms

Actie	Military action
Assistant-resident	Civil servant, direct subordinate of a resident
Atap	Palm leaves, used for roofs
Baboe	Female servant
Binnenlands Bestuur (BB)	Dutch Civil Administration
Bersiap	To be ready, be alert, used to characterize the early period of the revolution
Boesoeke	Rotten, unreliable
Dagorders	Daily orders by army command
Darul Islam (DI)	Lit. home of islam, political movement to realize an Islamic state
Depot Speciale Troepen (DST)	Dutch commando's
Dessa	Rural municipality
Directoraat Centrale Opleidingen (DCO)	Central Training Institution of the Dutch armed forces
Djimats	Amulets
Gerechtshof	(Modern) Dutch Court of Justice
Gouverneur-generaal (GG)	Governor-general, highest Dutch authority in the Indies
Hadji	Title of a muslim that has been on pilgrimage to Mecca
Heiho	Indonesian auxiliary forces under the Japanese
Hizbullah	Army of Allah, Islamic militia
HKGOB	Headquarters of the Great East and Borneo, KNIL
Hoge Vertegenwoordiger van de Kroon (HVK)	High Representative of the Crown
International Institute for Social History (IISG)	
Infantry (Inf.)	KNIL Infantry battalion

Kali	River
Kampong	Village
Kepala Kampong	Kampong head, Zuid-Celebes
Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV)	Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies
Koninklijke Landmacht (KL)	Royal Army
Koninklijke Marine (KM)	Royal Navy
Klewang	Short sabre, machete
Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger (KNIL)	Royal Netherlands Indies Army
Korps Marechaussee	Dutch special forces (1890-1942)
Korte Verklaring	Short Declaration, Dutch contract with local rulers
Kraton	Palace of the Sultan (Aceh)
Loerah	Village head (Java)
Markas	Army post, headquarters, used by the Dutch to indicate enemy locations.
Memorie van Overgave	Civil Service (BB) report
Militaire Inlichtingen Dienst (MID)	Local Military Intelligence Service
Missigit	Mosque
Militaire Politie (MP)	Military Police
Nationaal Archief (NA)	National Archive, The Hague
Netherlands Eastern Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS)	Central Intelligence service, HQ in Batavia
Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH)	
Negara Indonesia Timur	Federal State of East Indonesia
Negara Pasundan	Federal State West-Java
Operatie	Dutch military action
Partai Ra'jat Pasundan (PRP)	The Pasundan Peoples Party

Passer	Marketplace
Pemoeda	Youth, young people (used to characterize revolutionary youth)
Penghoeloe	Village head, Sumatra
Prisoner of War (POW)	
Radja	Ruler
Rampok	Robbery, plunder
Regiment Infanterie (RI)	Regiment Infantry (KL)
Resident	Highest Dutch regional civil servant
Residentie	Residency, Administrative region
Riksa	Small cart
Regiment Stoottroepen (RS)	Regiment Shock Troops
Sabillilah	Lit. path of Allah, Muslim militia
Sawah	Wet rice field
South East Asia Command (SEAC)	Allied Command centre
Staat van Oorlog en Beleg (SOB).	State of War and Siege, law
Territoriaal Bestuursadviseur (TBA)	Territorial Administration-councillor (resident)
Tentra Islam Indonesia (TII)	Islamic Army of Indonesia
Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI)	Indonesian National Army (name of the official Republican armed forces after May 1947, earlier TKR and TRI)
Toko	Shop
Territoriaal tevens Troepen commando (TPC)	Territorial and Troop Command
Vak	Geographical area of an army unit
VPTL	Dutch Army manual
Wedana	District leader, Java