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Jackson's Flying Dutchmen: The Significance of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School

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The University of Southern Mississippi

JACKSON'S FLYING DUTCHMEN: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ROYAL
NETHERLANDS MILITARY FLYING SCHOOL

by

Samuel Howard Ward

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

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August 2014

ABSTRACT

JACKSON'S FLYING DUTCHMEN: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS MILITARY FLYING SCHOOL

by Samuel Howard Ward

August 2014

From May 1942 thru February 1944, the United States allowed the Netherlands to train its aviators at Jackson Army Air Base. Known as the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School, the training the Dutch conducted helped rebuild the Royal Netherland Air Force and the air component of the Royal Netherland Navy. The Dutch military came to Jackson because they lost their territory to foreign invaders. Furthermore, the surviving members of the Dutch military felt compelled to endure and carry on the fight. The United States military selected Jackson Army Air Base because of its geographic location, the existing infrastructure at the base, and the support the community had for both the military and aviation.

Once in Jackson, the instructors and students of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School interacted with both the American military forces stationed at the base and the civilians living in Jackson. Through their interactions with the American military, the Dutch adopted a more methodical and scientific method to pilot training like the Americans. While the Dutch military adopted several other American military traditions, they did not adopt them wholesale. The Dutch also interacted with the civilians of Jackson. The Dutch and Jacksonians interacted in a variety of ways displaying both the positive and negative aspects of both cultures.

Ultimately the Dutch experience in Jackson was one of the first successful multinational training experiments in the U.S. The Dutch helped open the doors to the international training programs seen today.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tucked away near the end of the World War I section of the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby is a small picture of American bi-planes flying in formation over the French countryside. The lead aircraft is that of Carl “Tooe” Spaatz, who would become the first Chief of Staff of the Air Force after World War II. His primary wingman, or number two, is William Stovall, the only Mississippi ace from the war. Seeing that picture of Stovall made me wonder what other contributions Mississippi made to aviation through the years.

In the World War II section of the museum, I saw an even more curious display. From May 1942 thru February 1944, Jackson Army Air Base was the home of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School, a training base for a nation with no home. The story of the Dutchmen piqued my curiosity. I grew up in an Air Force family, and I can still remember the stories of Chuck Yeager, Robin Olds, Eddie Rickenbacker, and other Air Force legends. However, I had never heard of the flying Dutchmen that made Jackson their home. Why did they come to Jackson? What did they learn from the American forces stationed at the base? How did they interact with the people of Jackson? I was fortunate enough to meet the museum director Dr. Chad Daniels, who was gracious enough to give me a copy of all the document he had at the museum, and pointed me in the right direction for future research.

Overall, nearly 800 pilot trainees, instructor pilots, administrators, and family members who were able to escape capture from both the Germans and the Japanese called Jackson home from 1942-1944. By the end of the war, the new pilots served

alongside the Allies in both the European and Pacific theatres. The bulk of the Dutch forces, though, served in the Pacific from a small base in Australia.

This thesis will argue that even though the Dutch had a small force the presence of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School in Jackson had a significant impact on both the Dutch people and the people of Jackson. The Dutch in Jackson provided a source of hope for Dutch people under the occupation of Nazi Germany and the Japanese. The second chapter also looks at the reasons the American military chose to locate the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School at Jackson. Jackson was selected due to its geographic advantages, as well as the incredible support Jackson displayed for the military and aviation.

Once at Jackson Army Air Base, the Dutch and Americans interacted creating a unique experience in World War II. Chapter III looks at the interactions between the militaries of the Netherlands and the United States. While at Jackson, the Dutch adopted the American style of pilot training, which was more scientific and calculated. However, the Dutch did not adopt all of American military's traditions. Long held Dutch traditions, like a highly structured rank system that did not allow for interactions between officer and enlisted members, were challenged but did not change.

The Dutch also had significant interactions with the local population in Jackson. Through dances, dating, and sports, the Dutch and Americans were able to interact and participate in a significant cultural exchange. Both groups developed a deep and profound respect for the other, which created a bond that would last long after the Dutch forces left and the war ended.

Ultimately, the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School is significant because it was a fully autonomous Dutch training base within another country. Other nations that wished to train their forces in the United States gave up the right to have their own countrymen teach. Everyone but the Dutch integrated fully within the American training system, taught from start to finish by Americans. The Dutch, however, had their own training program for Dutchmen and by Dutchmen with minimal interaction from American forces. The wildly successful program at Jackson displayed how effective a joint training environment could be. The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School helped pave the way for future multi-national joint training exercises, many of which continue today.

When looking at the literature on air combat during World War II, the primary debates surround the effectiveness of the bombing campaigns in both theatres, the use of the atomic bomb, and the new combat stresses aircrews experienced during the war. Much like an action film, the training that prepared aircrews for combat looks like a montage capturing months of training and learning into a few pages or even paragraphs. Therefore, this work will focus primarily on the training environment of Jackson Army Air Base and not the combat the Dutch experienced after they left. It is fitting the emphasis remains on the training environment, too, as Jackson had a far more profound impact on the Dutch and future multi-national training exercises than the combat the Dutch experienced.

There is a phrase, often used in boxing, called “hitting above your weight.” Coaches use this phrase to describe fighters who, due to physical limitations, should not be able to compete, but they are able to compete, and do so with success. The Royal

Netherlands Military Flying School was small when compared to the overall size of the Allies. Their incredible legacy, which continues to impact both Dutchmen and Americans, proves that Jackson's "Flying Dutchmen" hit far above their weight.

CHAPTER II

WHY DID THE DUTCH COME TO JACKSON?

The rumble and hum start in the distance, almost imperceptibly. After a few seconds, what was once a hum turns into a low growl, and a half minute later it becomes a deafening roar. Glancing toward the heavens, a BT-13 aircraft fills the sky, passing just one hundred feet above an isolated cotton field in the middle of Mississippi. Yet another hot shot pilot training at Jackson Army Air Base trying to impress one of the local girls, disturbing the tranquility of this small farming community. While the airplane's noise and low altitude may cause a momentary inconvenience to the planters in this region, these boys are training to go to war, and for that the people of the United States are grateful.

The pilots filling the Mississippi skies, however, were not the typical flying cadets with whom most other communities interacted. In fact, these boys did not even speak the same language as their neighbors. Jackson Army Air Base bore witness to one of the most unique, and possibly one of the most important, joint training missions during World War II. From May of 1942 until February 1944, Jackson Army Air Base fell under the command of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School, an organization whose primary goal was to train Dutch aviators. Once trained, these pilots would aid the Allies' war efforts.

Why did the Dutch fliers need a training base, and why did the United States select Jackson as its location? The Dutch needed the training base for multiple reasons. Their homeland had been forced into conflict by both the Germans and the Japanese, the people back home needed hope that their oppression would end, and they needed native

Dutchmen to contribute to that effort. The military chose Jackson Army Air Base as the headquarters of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School because the town was incredibly supportive of military efforts, the physical attributes of Jackson were conducive to flight training, and there was an existing military infrastructure in Jackson that would accommodate all of the Dutch training needs.

The road to Jackson, Mississippi began during one of the darkest years in the history of the Netherlands. The First World War sent shockwaves through the Netherlands and thoroughly frightened the Dutch people. The war that was supposed to end all wars devolved into trench warfare in Europe, and the Dutch had a front row seat to the carnage, death, and mental anguish the conflict created. As a result, during the 1920s, the Netherlands declared that it would abide by a “strict neutrality” with regard to all further conflicts on the continent.¹ The Dutch assumed that should there be another conflict the European powers would do the honorable thing and avoid the Netherlands, sparing the country from the trauma of another war.

The Dutch not only put their faith in the countries that surrounded them but also they actively looked for ways to decrease any possible hostile communication with their country. While they repeatedly made public announcements about their neutrality, the Dutch also began to limit their military power in Europe. The bulk of the Dutch armed forces was located in their colonies in the Pacific, so the cuts made to their European forces effectively disabled the Netherlands should it fall under attack.² Some of the most drastic force cuts included reducing the role of the army to the protection of the critical canals in the interior of the country, basic military and infantry training combined were

¹ P.L. Doorman, *Military Operations in the Netherlands* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1944), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 3.

reduced to five and a half months, enlistments were limited to eleven months, and funding was drastically cut, requiring forces to work with old and outdated weapons.³ Therefore, the Dutch made it exceedingly clear that they were not going to engage in any offensive warfare and ensured their military lacked the ability to conduct such operations.

With the lion's share of manpower and material going to the Pacific, the Netherlands was unable to respond to the growing Nazi threat, which by the beginning of 1940 clearly had designs to take the European Low Countries. After witnessing the expansion of Germany into Czechoslovakia and the Rhineland, the Dutch refused the Nazi offer of a non-aggression pact as they did not completely trust the Nazis and did not want to alienate other European powers.⁴ Unfortunately for the Dutch, the refusal caused the Nazis to increase pressure on Holland's shipping and commercial interests.

While the Netherlands decided rearmament was necessary to defend its economic interests, it made two fatal mistakes. The first was that it waited far too long to begin the rearmament process. During the Nazi invasion on 10 May 1940, the Dutch were never able to expand beyond their canal zones. The inability to project power was critical to German success because the canals are in the low parts of the country, enabling the Nazis to seize the limited high grounds uncontested.⁵ By this time, the Dutch only had one bomber and four fighter squadrons, giving their air force an underwhelming five total combat squadrons. The Dutch ground forces also lacked a core of experienced soldiers needed to battle effectively a numerically superior enemy force.⁶ While they were able to

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Joseph Kenworthy, *The Campaign in the Low Countries* (London: Hutchison & Co., 1940), 36.

⁵ Doorman, *Military Operations in the Netherlands*, 22.

⁶ L. De Jong, *Holland Fights the Nazis* (London: The Right Book Club, 1944), 20.

put up a good fight, their lack of military preparedness, modern equipment, and leadership doomed the Netherlands to failure.

The second issue is that the Dutch never requested outside assistance to ensure their territorial integrity. Again preoccupied with its need to maintain its strict neutrality, the government of the Netherlands refused several British offers of aid.⁷ Thus, when the Nazis struck at 0530 on 10 May, there was little any government could do. Immediately after the Allied countries heard of the invasion, they sent troops to Belgium in hopes that they could slow the Nazi offensive enough to enable an organized counter offensive. However, the twenty French and British divisions destined for Holland could not get through Belgium before the Dutch capitulated.⁸

The invasion of the Netherlands is critical to understanding why the Dutch came to Jackson. The first, and most obvious reason for this, is that by 15 May 1940, the Dutch people had no homeland, and they still wanted to contribute to the global war effort. Any idea the Netherlands had of remaining strictly neutral through the next European war was abandoned. As they were now involved in a war, the Dutch needed forces to take part in reclaiming their country. They needed a training base to build up that force, and there was no room in Europe to train them.

The other critical reason is that the German Luftwaffe decimated the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The five squadrons the Dutch had were destroyed or captured, so there was no Dutch presence over the European skies. On 13 May 1940, the Dutch Royal Family and the bulk of the Royal Netherlands Naval Forces were able to escape to the

⁷ Doorman, *Military Operations in the Netherlands*, 15.

⁸ Kenworthy, *The Campaign in the Low Countries*, 54.

safety of London.⁹ Thus, the navy could continue the fight against the Germans within the Allied command. The air force, though, had to rely on its training base in the Dutch East Indies to replenish their European air presence. However, that training base would not remain in Dutch possession long.

The Dutch East Indies, what is today Indonesia, were to the Netherlands what India was to the British Empire, an invaluable economic resource. While the Netherlands may have been one of the leading producers of cattle, dairy products, flax, coal, and textile manufacturing, the small size of the Netherlands constantly limited it when compared to the rest of Europe.¹⁰ The Dutch overcame their limited size by expanding into the Pacific, which allowed them to increase their economic standing in relation to the bigger European nations. The Dutch East Indies had immense economic value to the Netherlands. Because of these islands, the Dutch were some of Europe's biggest producers of rubber, tin, and petroleum, all of which were increasingly valuable during wartime.¹¹ The Japanese viewed this island chain as the strategic jewel of the South Pacific because it would increase Japan's wartime production capabilities, put its forces within striking distance of western Australia, and give it control over the valuable Straits of Malacca.¹² The Dutch knew the Japanese would come after their resource rich islands; it was only a matter of when.

Along with its valuable natural resources, the Dutch East Indies held the bulk of the military power for the Netherlands. As the islands were more economically valuable, the majority of military goods and funding went to this area to ensure peace and protect

⁹ De Jong, *Holland Fights the Nazis*, 17.

¹⁰ Kenworthy, *The Campaign in the Low Countries*, 42.

¹¹ Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 174.

¹² *Ibid*, 176.

from foreign invasion. Due to the large amounts of unpopulated land, something the Netherlands lacked in Europe, the Dutch East Indies were the home to the primary flight training school for both the Royal Netherlands Air Force and Navy.¹³ Therefore, while the Netherlands had fallen on the European continent, its military capabilities in the Pacific were generally unhurt, and the Dutch maintained the ability to contribute to the Allied war effort.

Unfortunately, the Japanese caught the Dutch when help was least likely to come. The Japanese invasion of Java, the most resource rich island in the Dutch East Indies, began on 27 February 1942.¹⁴ While Vice Admiral Conrad Helfrich put up a worthy defense of the island, the forces of the Netherlands were counting on their Allies to give them military and financial aid. They were let down in large part because the United States had recently lost the Philippines and suffered catastrophic losses in the Japanese surprise attack at Pearl Harbor. Thus, when the Japanese finally came to Java, the Dutch could only rely on themselves and a handful of American pilots passing through on their way out of the Philippines.¹⁵

Andries Bakker remembers the Japanese invasion of Java with remarkable clarity. After his brother joined the navy in 1930, Andries was glad his brother chose to serve, as he felt military life would not be for him. Unfortunately, the Netherlands drafted him in 1934 to a service commitment of three years.¹⁶ After joining the military, Bakker fell in love with the culture, the drill, and the concept of contributing to his country. Thus, in

¹³ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 1, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

¹⁴ Ian Toll, *Pacific Crucible* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012), 252.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 257.

¹⁶ Andries Bakker, "Memoirs from World War II," n.d., 2, The Mississippi Armed Forces Museum.

1937 he reenlisted for another three-year tour. Although the clouds were building in both the Pacific and Europe, they had not yet developed into storm clouds, and Bakker believed that by 1940 he would be able to leave the navy.¹⁷

After the German invasion of the Netherlands, the military sent Bakker's ship, in conjunction with a larger naval force, to the Dutch East Indies in an attempt to secure the islands and their valuable resources. While the bulk of the navy survived the German invasion, the European based air force did not. The Dutch commanded Bakker to change his job, and he went from being a sailor to an aerial gunner on Dutch bombers to help compensate for the losses.¹⁸ He was living at the airfield the day the Japanese invaded Java, and almost instantaneously the base where he was training received heavy bombing. Bakker recalled the valor that many of the Dutch and American pilots displayed as they went up in a series of stalling actions to ensure as many of the Dutch were able to evacuate as possible. Bakker recalled that "It was an awful sight to see those planes come burning down, and most of them were ours."¹⁹

The courageous actions of the pilots over the skies of Java allowed the Dutch to perform an ill-conceived, but ultimately effective escape. However, a majority of the Dutch families on the islands were unable to take part in the retreat, and the military had to leave them to the mercy of the Japanese soldiers.²⁰ Bakker recalled that even the military's evacuation was uncoordinated, and he had to leave most of his valuable items in the barracks on the base. The confusion was due in large part to the chaos the Japanese military created on the island. Its destruction of the Dutch military was so thorough that

¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸ Ibid., 6.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931-1945*, 178.

the members of the air force could not evacuate by plane but instead marched to the shore and boarded boats in order to escape.²¹

The escape plan, however, lacked focus and foresight as the troops, aviators, and sailors were sitting ducks in the waters off the coast of the Dutch East Indies. The ships were not capable of protecting themselves if the Japanese decided to attack, which they did. According to Bakker, his ship had three fake mounted wooden guns to attempt to scare the Japanese planes from attacking.²² The one real gun was mounted on the front of the ship, and its primary purpose was to scare the Japanese submarines from attacking, though it would accomplish little if a submarine did attack. Humiliated, the Dutch forces sailed into Australian harbors licking their wounds as they failed to protect their lands from invasions by two separate empires. Adding insult to injury, in both instances, the military capitulated in less than two weeks, retreated, and left Dutch citizens alone to suffer at the hands of their conquerors.

Japanese battleships harassed the Dutch forces until they reached the safety of Australia. The military defeat, more so than the defeat in Europe, inspired the Dutch military to redouble their efforts to contribute to the war effort. The difference between this loss and the loss in Europe is that losing the Dutch East Indies caused the Dutch people to lose hope that the Netherlands would continue to exist. One of the common themes when reading the publications of Dutch author L. de Jong's work on the Dutch resistance is that the Dutch East Indies gave the people of the Netherlands hope that they could rebuild and eventually aid in the effort to rid the Low Countries of German

²¹ Bakker, "Memoirs from World War II," 7.

²² *Ibid.*, 9.

oppression.²³ The Dutch East Indies had the natural resources the military needed to rebuild, and they had the military installations and leadership to conduct proper training. After their defeat, the Dutch military had no geographic location to call home, and nowhere to train. In this defeat, one can begin to see a reason why the Dutch came to the United States: to preserve hope. By coming to America, the Dutch could actively work toward contributing to the downfall of the empires that conquered them, giving Dutch citizens hope that forces from the Netherlands would contribute to liberating their homeland.

If there can be a silver lining in their defeat to the Japanese, though, it is that their military, in particular the Dutch pilots, gained valuable combat experience. Many of the pilots who became instructors at Jackson Army Air Base were combat veterans from the skies over Java.²⁴ Their experience ensured that the Dutch would be able to streamline their training process as the instructors would be able to teach the most efficient and effective ways of combating Japanese Zeroes in particular. Much like in Europe, the Dutch military lived to fight another day. While it lacked the materials necessary to conduct the war, it had the necessary experience. The decisive factor in the battle for the Dutch East Indies was the Japanese domination of the skies, and the Dutch wanted to ensure they could neutralize that threat the next time the two forces faced one another. The possibility of returning to avenge their losses gave the Dutch hope; they just needed a training base.

The other reason the Dutch people needed to come to America to train was that while they may not have been the most aggressive people prior to the outbreak of the

²³ De Jong, *Holland Fights the Nazis*, 26.

²⁴ Toll, *Pacific Crucible*, 263.

war, the Dutch were by no means pacifists. One of the more intriguing accounts of this fighting spirit comes from Dutch-Canadian Willem Roozeboom. Born in Holland in 1921, Roozeboom's father moved to British Columbia in the mid-1920s to claim and farm land from the Canadian government.²⁵ Growing up in British Columbia, Roozeboom learned English as his primary language and took on more Canadian culture as he had no recollection of his time in the Netherlands, but he continued to have a strong connection to and pride in his native Netherlands. After the invasion of the Netherlands by the Germans, Queen Wilhelmina stayed in London to run the government in exile. However, her daughter, Princess Juliana, and her family took up residence in Canada in an attempt to rally support for the Dutch cause.²⁶

In response to the royal family's arrival in Canada, Roozeboom's father moved his family to Vancouver in late 1941 and began working in the Dutch embassy as a translator converting Dutch messages to English and vice versa. The primary goal of this mission was to create bulletins and radio broadcasts throughout Canada and the American Northwest to encourage anyone with Dutch heritage to join the military of the Netherlands.²⁷ Even though Nazi Germany had completely annihilated the Netherlands and the Japanese were closing in on Dutch territory in the Pacific the Dutch government, once forced into the war, was looking for a way to continue the fight. After hearing the calls for aid, and inspired by the persistence and determination of the Dutch fighting spirit, Willem Roozeboom enlisted in the Royal Netherlands Air Force and caught the

²⁵ Willem Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview, September 7, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

²⁶ De Jong, *Holland Fights the Nazis*, 18.

²⁷ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

first train he could to Jackson, Mississippi, to join his fellow Dutchmen in avenging their losses and freeing their countrymen from tyranny.²⁸

Queen Wilhelmina addressed the subject of the Dutch fighting spirit as well in an address she made from London immediately after her evacuation from Holland. The Queen of the Netherlands eloquently summed up the Dutch fighting spirit when she called on the Dutch people, “To remain true to the motto of the House of Orange, of Holland, of that immense part of the world that is fighting for what is infinitely more precious than life, *je maintiendrai* – ‘I shall maintain.’”²⁹ While this quote may not seem like a typical rallying cry, it highlights two key factors of the Dutch fighting spirit. The first is to reassure the people of the Netherlands, who had lost everything, that there were Dutch forces just across the English Channel, in the Pacific Ocean, and around the world who were maintaining the fight for them. By reminding the people that the Dutch were a part of that fighting force, she gave the people remaining in the Netherlands hope, and inspired them to continue the fight. The other factor of the Dutch fighting spirit is in the motto of the House of Orange, “I shall maintain.” By coming to America, the Dutch would be able to maintain the fight as opposed to watching other nations liberate their territories. The Dutch fighting spirit of maintaining is of the utmost importance as it reassured the members of the armed forces and the Dutch people that the fight would continue so long as the military and the government continued to exist. According to the queen, the Dutch would continue to maintain the fight so long as there were Dutchmen held under the yoke of tyranny.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Kenworthy, *The Campaign in the Low Countries*, 63.

The final way one can see the Dutch fighting spirit is through the actions of their people under the Nazis. Once the Nazis completed the takeover of the Netherlands people were at a loss for words, men were crying openly in the streets, and many people genuinely feared for their lives.³⁰ While this may not seem like the typical reaction one would expect from a people with a proud fighting heritage, their recovery from this blow is what truly shows the courage and fighting spirit of the Dutch people.

After coming to terms with the government's need to evacuate Holland, the Dutch people came together to create one of the most effective resistance movements in Europe. Two weeks after the fall of the Netherlands, the people wore white carnation flowers on their lapels to show solidarity with each other and their commitment to continue the fight. The Nazi soldiers attempted to rip the flowers off the Dutch people, and in response, the Dutch people began putting razors behind the flower petals to cut the German soldiers.³¹ Though not taking to the streets in open warfare, the people were starting to fight back.

The resistance also extended into the workforce of the Netherlands. One of the major issues facing the Dutch after the invasion was rampant unemployment. Nearly 150,000 people were unemployed by the end of the summer of 1940.³² The people of the Netherlands actively slowed work down, often complained, and left work early and unfinished in response to the poor working conditions. While the number of people unemployed decreased to nearly 100,000 by the end of 1940, the large number of people shipped to German labor and concentration camps, accounts for the change in unemployment not an improvement in the working conditions or economic situation.³³

³⁰ De Jong, *Holland Fights the Nazis*, 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³² *Ibid.*, 52.

³³ *Ibid.*, 55.

Whether it was through open displays of solidarity or through actively slowing down the work of the entire nation, the Dutch people lived up to their motto with great zeal, and endured.

It is apparent that the Royal Netherlands Military could not give up the fight. It was motivated because it lost its land in a humiliating way, it heard stories about its relatives suffering under foreign oppression, and they, like the rest of the Dutch people, wanted to continue the fight. Their leaders reiterated that sentiment in their addresses to the public, and the public lived out that spirit on a daily basis. The Dutch needed a training base. The only question left for them was where that training base would be.

Initially, the Dutch thought they would be able to establish their new home and training base in Australia, where the bulk of the military fled after the Japanese invaded the Dutch East Indies.³⁴ Unfortunately for the Dutch, this was not to be as the Australians had to channel all of their available military resources into combating the Japanese force that was now threatening both sides of the island.³⁵ The Dutch then began to consider other options. They considered Canada as an alternative; however, the weather was not conducive to the rapid creation of a flying force qualified on multiple types of aircraft. Their search quickly turned to the United States, where they would soon find a home to train the forces that would one day help the Dutch reclaim their homeland.

For several years leading up to the outbreak of World War II, U.S. Congressmen debated the merits of maintaining either an isolationist or more aggressive posture in the international arena. Fortunately for the Franklin Roosevelt administration, Congress created a favorable environment for the president to make the decisions he felt were best

³⁴ Bakker, "Memoirs from World War II," 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

for the country.³⁶ While this group did not directly pass any legislation that would influence the conduct of the war, it allowed President Roosevelt to act more aggressively with legislation that already existed, like the Lend-Lease Act. Through the hawks in Congress, Roosevelt was able to foster an atmosphere that encouraged foreign nations to seek aid from the United States.³⁷ The friendly atmosphere before, and especially after, the attack on Pearl Harbor would serve to increase the attractiveness of the US to the Dutch.

The piece of legislation that would most greatly influence the decision of the Netherlands with regard to requesting assistance from America was the Lend-Lease Act. Edward Stettinius, the head of all programs that fell under the purview of Lend-Lease, and President Roosevelt used this legislation as weapon before the Pearl Harbor attacks as a way for the United States to aid the Allied cause without officially becoming a participant in the war.³⁸ The logic as Stettinius, one of the primary administrators of the Lend-Lease Act, recalled, “Was to aid your neighbor in putting out a house fire without running into the house.”³⁹ Thus, prior to the United States coming into the war, there were significant trade agreements written up with the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and Australia. In each of these situations, the United States loaned out military materiel and advisors to aid in the Allied cause.

What made the prospects of a Lend-Lease Act agreement lucrative for the Dutch was that the recipient nations could receive large quantities of aircraft, something their

³⁶ Mark Chadwin, *The Hawks of World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), v.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁸ Edward Stettinius, *Lend-Lease: Weapon for Victory* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

military lacked. After their escape to Australia, the Dutch military saw over fifty brand new Lockheed-Hudson bombers roll into Australian airfields.⁴⁰ As a nation with a desperate need for aircraft (their air force had to leave any planes that still operated on Java), an agreement with the United States seemed like one of the best alternatives for the Dutch military.

Though early in the war, there was also an established precedence for foreign nationals training on United States soil. By March of 1941, a group of British pilots travelled from England to Florida to conduct their advanced pilot training.⁴¹ The program, run out of Arcadia and Clewiston, was an instant success. Local families were meeting the aviators at the airport to drive them to the bases; they invited them to their homes and served as an intricate support system for the RAF cadet-pilots.⁴² As this program was proving to be a resounding success, the American government was more inclined to allow an increasing number of foreign pilots to train. A training base in the United States would give the Dutch the security they would need to train, and like the British, the American military and the American people would support them.

The final tipping point to the Dutch decision to come to America was that there was an existing agreement between the Netherlands and the United States. In what the military called a United Nations pact between the two countries, the Dutch received a favorable status when dealing with the United States.⁴³ The U.S.-Dutch agreement in particular is what enabled the Dutch to have a unique relationship with the United States

⁴⁰ Ibid., 170.

⁴¹ Thomas Greenhaw, "Defending America by Aiding the Allies: British Student Pilots at Arcadia and Clewiston, 1941-1945," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (1995): 156.

⁴² Ibid., 164.

⁴³ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943," 16.

regarding the operations and training regimen of the Dutch on the base. Most other nations, in particular Great Britain, were only allowed to send part of their flying cadets to America, and those cadets were expected to adopt the American pilot training model.⁴⁴ Under the agreement with the Dutch, the United States would allow for the Dutch to maintain complete autonomy over the training program and would intervene only when it was necessary or requested by the Dutch military.⁴⁵

While this explains the attraction of coming to the United States, it fails to account for why the military selected Jackson, Mississippi as the home of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School. One of the most important factors in this decision was the city of Jackson itself. The town of Jackson has a well-documented history of flying, and a deep connection to aviation. In 1928, Jackson opened one of the first municipal airports in the Southeast. The municipal airport served as a means of giving the local population a way through which it could pursue its dreams of aviation. What is incredibly telling about this, however, is that the measure to build the airport passed with a resounding margin of twenty five to one by the city board.⁴⁶

Along with the construction of this base is the fact that Jackson actively sought aviation personalities to come and address the town. In 1929, to commemorate the opening of the commercial portion of the airport, the town brought in flying legend Charles Lindbergh to give a speech and increase aviation enthusiasm.⁴⁷ After his speech, the participation in recreational and sport flying at the municipal airport made a

⁴⁴ "Training of Foreign Nationals by the AAF 1939-1945" (Air Historical Office, 1947), 1, Mississippi Armed Forces Museum.

⁴⁵ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943," 17.

⁴⁶ "History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1942-June 1941" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 9, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

significant increase.⁴⁸ There was also a steady stream of performers who visited the town, making it one of the most active regional airports in America. At one point, Jackson was in a steep competition with Atlanta for the most popular regional airport, which Jackson ultimately lost. However, as the demand for trained pilots increased, Jackson became one of the primary training hubs in the country.⁴⁹

In 1940, the United States government could no longer ignore the threat that loomed in Europe, especially the growing strength of the Luftwaffe. In response to growing national concern, President Roosevelt went before Congress and called for the nation to increase the production of airplanes within the United States to fifty thousand planes by the end of the year, with fifty thousand additional planes built each year until there was no longer a threat to the United States.⁵⁰ While some of these planes went to Europe and other allies throughout the world, as men like famed aviator Al Williams suggested, the bulk of the aircraft remained in the United States to bolster the defenses of the nation.⁵¹

The call to increase aircraft production did two things for the country. The first was that it sparked a massive uptick in the production of aircraft unlike anything the nation had ever seen.⁵² The nation's production lines were creating aircraft as fast as they possibly could in order to meet the quotas that the president made. However, once this call went out, astute politicians began to ask questions that, if answered properly, could spell long term success for their communities. The first was where were all the new

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "62nd Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment, Mississippi Institute of Aeronautics," 1944, 5, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁵¹ Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Airpower: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 92.

⁵² Ibid., 94.

planes going to go? The second question was who was going to fly all the new planes the U.S. produced? The politicians of Jackson were smart aviation enthusiasts, and in 1940 they began answering those questions correctly.

While the town already had a municipal airport, it began the construction of a second airfield nearby. Under the guidance of Oliver Lafayette Parks from East St. Louis, the city of Jackson approved the construction of what would become the Mississippi Institute of Aeronautics.⁵³ The creation of the school shows the level of dedication the town had to aviation. In under one year, the town of Jackson turned a cotton field into a training field where both civilian and military pilots came to learn to fly.⁵⁴ The new airfield would not become the home of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School; however, it would serve as an important auxiliary field to the Dutch as their program grew in size.

While Jackson constructed the new airfield, however, the mayor would not allow the municipal airport to fade into darkness. Mayor Scott sent personal letters to both Senator Pat Harrison and Colonel Ira Eaker, commander of the Southeast Region for training, lobbying for an air base in Jackson.⁵⁵ The lobbying brought almost immediate military inquiries about the possibility of a field at Jackson. After an initial evaluation, the military determined that it would create a base at Jackson. While the creation of this base fit the new expansion plan Mayor Scott had for Jackson, it was the conditions the town agreed to that showed its dedication to supporting the military and aviation.⁵⁶

⁵³ “62nd Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment, Mississippi Institute of Aeronautics,” 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁵ “History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1941-June 1942,” 11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

Because the United States government was making preparations to handle what it thought would be a passing threat, the government would not buy land, but would lease the land and the rights to build a base. Jackson Army Air Base was no exception to that policy. The lease for the base initially had five primary stipulations. For the government to agree to the base it needed the 144.4 acres of land adjacent to the municipal airport. The military would get a five to ten acre plot of land for a radio station, the right of way for a new railroad spur in Jackson, full unrestricted and concurrent use of the municipal airport, and an option for the government to buy up to 466.14 acres of land at any time until 1966.⁵⁷ After some initial debate, the government modified the lease to include an option for them to expand at any time, and the city would be required to purchase that land for the base. Clearly the terms of this lease were one sided and enough to make even the most dedicated person balk. However, Jackson was not slightly dedicated to the cause; it was all in. The city voted almost unanimously to lease the land to the government for the base at the annual rate of one dollar a year.⁵⁸

The final attribute of the town that proved it was a favorable location for the military was its active Red Cross. While the men coming to Jackson would be actively committed to their mission, their families would essentially be refugees in a foreign land. The Red Cross in Jackson, upon hearing that the Dutch would train at the base, immediately exceeded everyone's expectations. It ordered subscriptions to six different Dutch language newspapers and magazines; its leaders learned as much about Dutch culture as they could and began vigorously working on a way to get letters to loved ones

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 13.

in Europe behind enemy lines.⁵⁹ Thus, one of the primary reasons the military chose the town of Jackson to be the home of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School is that the town was one of the friendliest to the military, and it actively sought to play a role in the base and its operations.

Another factor in Jackson's selection over other possible candidates was the city's existing military infrastructure. As a result of the 1940 expansions to the base, Jackson welcomed a group of medium range bombers to Mississippi in 1941.⁶⁰ When the Dutch began talks with the United States, they requested that wherever the US stationed them have some existing infrastructure around to ensure that they could start their training the day they arrived at the base.⁶¹ Because the United States became involved in World War II, the military mobilized the bomber group from Jackson in early 1942 and sent it to the front lines of the air war in Europe. In a 29 April, 1942 telegram, Major General Barton Yount requested that Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Wright find a training location for the entire Dutch military.⁶² One of the first places the search committee considered was the recently vacated Jackson Army Air Base.

One of the most favorable aspects of Jackson Army Air Base when compared to others in the region was the quantity of auxiliary fields and bombing ranges that fell under the purview of the base. One of the most important aspects for training new pilots is mastering the critical phases of flight. The critical phases of flight are the phases of flight where accidents are most likely to happen, takeoff and landings. When a lot of

⁵⁹ Ibid., 152.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁶¹ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943," 1.

⁶² Barton Yount, "Telegram from General Yount Advising of NEI Training, 1942," Air Force Historical Research Agency.

students are attempting to learn to fly, if there is only one suitable base for training, the traffic patterns become large, and training becomes inefficient. Therefore, auxiliary bases are of the utmost importance when training large volumes of students. These airstrips provided alternatives from the main base and increase the number of students who can train and the amount of repetitions they can complete. Jackson had a plethora of these airstrips in the local area. Along with the recently created Mississippi Institute of Aeronautics, pilots at Jackson could use bases in Forrest, Lime Prairie, Vicksburg, and several fields in Louisiana.⁶³ These auxiliary fields could accommodate all of the planes flown out of Jackson, which enabled any cadet at any phase of training to use any of the available fields. With all of these fields, the Dutch could train as many pilots as their instructors could handle.

Another key part of the infrastructure that was already intact by the time the Dutch arrived, were two relatively large bombing ranges. The more impressive range was located in Yazoo County. The range itself was 2,476.4 acres with three steel observation towers, which could quickly and completely assess the accuracy of a bombing run and immediately relay that information to the pilots and bombardiers.⁶⁴ The complex bombing range in Yazoo County was particularly difficult to construct, and it would be an immense aid in training Dutch bomber pilots. The other bombing range in Smith County was only 1,280 acres, however; this bombing range, much like an auxiliary field, allowed a high volume of bombers to be trained in as short a time as possible. With these bombing ranges ready for use, the selection committee for the new Dutch base saw many positives to the existing training infrastructure.

⁶³ "History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1941-June 1942," 50.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

Along with the training infrastructure, the existing units at the base were well equipped to handle an incoming training force. After the bombing group left, Jackson maintained four maintenance training squadrons in order to meet the demand of the new aircraft the US produced. By the time the Dutch would arrive, the base was home to the 6th, 735th, 736th, and 737th Flying Training Squadrons.⁶⁵ Having maintenance units already in place was a major benefit for Jackson with regard to becoming the new home of the Dutch forces. While the military would have to send more troops to augment the forces at Jackson, it would not have to create new squadrons or transfer squadrons to accommodate the needs of the new flying school.

The final advantage to the infrastructure of the base is that it already had training aircraft. To meet the Dutch needs, the United States provided AT-11s, BT-13As, and Lockheed 12-As, which would serve for use in primary and advanced fighter and bomber training.⁶⁶ The government, however, continued to augment the existing fleet at Jackson, and by the time the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School began training aviators, the fleet had expanded by sixty training aircraft.⁶⁷ The abundance of planes would allow the Dutch to begin their training en masse upon their arrival at the base. These aircraft, coupled with the auxiliary bases, bombing ranges, and the existing maintenance squadrons made a compelling case for establishing the Dutch training base at Jackson.

Beyond the materiel advantages, the military chose Jackson over other possibilities for the advantages its geographic location offered. When the Dutch requested a base of operations from Major General Yount, they wanted a base where they could

⁶⁵ Ibid., 106.

⁶⁶ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943," 13.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 14.

conduct training operations all year.⁶⁸ The main purpose for this was to ensure that the Dutch trained as many pilots as quickly as possible, so the Netherlands could return to both theatres of operation and participate in the liberation of their homelands.

The weather in Jackson during the 1940s was one of the most conducive to training pilots year-round. The temperature on average fluctuated from 48.5 to 83.4 degrees Fahrenheit, the prevailing winds in the region were a mild eight to ten miles per hour from the south, and the town averaged a modest fifty-five inches of rain per year.⁶⁹ These statistics were critical to conducting training operations, as the biggest problem when training pilots is the weather. With the annual temperatures never averaging below freezing, the base would never have to handle icy runways, planes with ice covering them, or severe ice damage to their maintenance equipment. For students, the ice would have made it impossible to fly, and training days would have been lost. All aircraft and bases have wind limits for flight operations, and training bases have the lowest wind limits. With the low prevailing winds, the training squadrons could count on an abundance of days with low winds and good flying weather.

Along with the atmospheric advantages, the terrain was favorable to a training base as well. The terrain at the base changed only twenty-two feet from the highest point to the lowest point on base.⁷⁰ Coupled with the flat terrain was the fact that immediately outside the base was still primarily agricultural land. The flat terrain limited the amount of obstacles in a pilot's path, allowing them better visibility and minimizing the chance of an accident occurring. However, should an accident occur, and most accidents occur near

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁹ "History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1941-June 1942," 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

the base during takeoff or landing, the fields around the base would limit the collateral damage and loss of human life. Training bases only amplify the importance of these terrain features, where new pilots are more likely to make mistakes during the critical phases of flight.

The final geographic advantage to the base is the ground itself. The soil where the base was located is marl, a mixture of silt and clay, that, while easy to move and build on, does not absorb water easily.⁷¹ The soil allowed for the Dutch to drain water away from the runway, which minimized the number of cancellations to flying operations after storms. Marl also allowed for the easy expansion of facilities should the Dutch require more hangars, classrooms, or dorms. The site was a perfect location for a training base that was intent on expanding and building its forces.

When the Dutch got off the train in Jackson, they were coming to the end of a journey that had taken them around the world. In what Willem Roozeboom described as a “ridiculous” military display, the battered Dutch marched proudly to their new home where they would train night and day to reclaim their homeland.⁷² The new base filled a need for the military of the Netherlands. They lost their land and had no home base at which to train, so they took the opportunity given to them by their American allies. They needed the base so they could continue to fight for the land they lost and the people they left behind. The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School was the living embodiment of that Dutch resolve and commitment.

The American government allowed the Dutch to use a base on American soil based on precedence established with the Lend-Lease Act, British training, and an

⁷¹ Ibid., 5.

⁷² Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

agreement between the Netherlands and the United States, which enabled the Dutch to conduct their training within US borders legally, with minimal American oversight.

While the base at the time of the agreement was undetermined, the treaty cleared the path for one of the most unique joint operations in the war.

The American military selected Jackson Army Air Base because the town was friendly to military and aviation operations, the existing infrastructure would allow for a flawless transition for the Dutch, and the atmospheric and geographic conditions in Jackson were ideal for flight training. While Jackson lacks the canals, tulip fields, and windmills that cover the Netherlands, it soon became a home for the Dutch. The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School embraced the local community, and the school flourished into one of the most interesting and successful training scenarios of the war.

CHAPTER III

THE MILITARY INTERACTIONS

Fifteen years into the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians approached the small island of Melos, demanding the islanders submit to Athens. Although the Melians had begun the war neutral, the Athenians' constant violation of their neutrality had forced them to seek some protection from the Spartans. During the ensuing dialogue, the vastly outnumbered and isolated islanders rejected the proposals put forward by the Athenians, inspiring the delegates to point out that, "in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept."⁷³

While the Melians held on to the hope of joining with Athens and protecting their town, the prophetic words of the Athenian delegation rang true that hope, "and such things which by encouraging hope lead men to ruin."⁷⁴ In World War II, the Royal Netherlands Air Force faced a similar situation as the Melians, only they did not have the pleasure of negotiations. The immense force of the Japanese military overcame their island defenses at Java and forced them to flee by whatever means necessary. However, unlike the Melians, the Dutch forces had a powerful ally that came to their aid, gave them a place to train, and helped them rebuild their forces. Unlike the Melians, hope was not a cruel mistress, but a reality that drove them to half way around the world to continue fighting. On May 10, 1942, the military of the Netherlands began its training at Jackson Army Air Base, with the limited aid of American military personnel.

⁷³ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), 401.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 404.

The American and the Dutch militaries were vastly different entities when they came together in Jackson. The Americans were in the middle of a buildup, expanding bases across the country and consuming massive amounts of resources to create enough military supplies to meet the demand of a force that was rapidly growing through volunteers and the Selective Service System.⁷⁵ Their Dutch counterparts were not as fortunate. They were a small force with minimal military equipment and no home country with a base. Over the twenty months the Dutch spent in Jackson, the militaries interacted on a regular basis. The cultural impact the Dutch had on the Americans was negligible. The limited influence the Dutch exerted on the Americans was due to the fact that the American forces at the base represented a sliver of the total US military population. While the Dutch could certainly leave an impression on individuals, the overall military culture would remain unchanged. The interaction was not negligible, however, for the Dutch. Both the Royal Netherlands Air Force and the air component of the Royal Netherlands Navy were at the base. Thus, the small American force influenced and altered Dutch military culture while the Dutch were at the base. The Dutch adapted and changed their military culture in ways that would ensure both short and long term military efficiency and effectiveness. However, the Dutch refused a wholesale adoption of the American way of war and maintained the parts of their military culture that most reflected their homeland.

Before one can begin to analyze the military cultures of the Dutch and American forces at Jackson, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of what military culture is, and what aspects of culture this chapter will cover. John Lynn argues that there are

⁷⁵ Lee Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 2.

three types of culture in any military campaign: social, military, and strategic.⁷⁶ The aspects of culture in this chapter pertain solely to the civilian military employees and uniformed service members stationed at Jackson Army Air Base. Therefore, Dutch interactions with the non-military civilians will not be explored in this chapter. Likewise, their tenure at the base did not significantly impact the Dutch strategic culture.

Prior to the military's arrival in Jackson, the Dutch government had bought the airplanes the aviators would fly in combat.⁷⁷ The purchase of these planes meant that the Dutch could not alter the combination of fighters and bombers they possessed. Therefore, the American military could not impact the strategic posturing of the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The Dutch military was stuck with the capabilities of the planes they purchased and could not easily change the capabilities of its air forces even if the Americans had changed their strategic view on airpower. It is also important to note that residents at training bases do not often discuss strategic level issues, as the focus is at an operational level.

Lynn defines military culture as the actions militaries take and how they rationalize what they do during combat.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, this definition is far too broad for this analysis. The Dutch in Jackson never saw combat, and therefore did not need to justify the morality of their actions while they were in Jackson. While Lynn helps refine what military culture is, his definition does not encapsulate the training environment like the one at Jackson.

⁷⁶ John Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture from Ancient Greece to Modern America* (Boulder: Westview, 2005), xx.

⁷⁷ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 18, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

⁷⁸ Lynn, *Battle*, xxi.

Unlike Lynn, Giuseppe Caforio does not limit his definition of military culture to a combat centered definition. Caforio claims that military culture encompasses the collective mindset of the members of a nation's military; however, there are five essential subdivisions to this definition.⁷⁹ Only three of those subdivisions are pertinent to the analysis of the Dutch in Jackson, though. In what Caforio calls the Differentiation Approach, he argues that one can find unique cultures within subgroups of the military.⁸⁰ Analysis at this level is useful as the Dutch forces at Jackson represent only the air components of the Dutch military. Thus, the military culture impacted at Jackson would have minimal influence on the members of the Dutch infantry. The cultural impacts would be limited to the aviation sub-community, with a particular emphasis on the operational flying community, as they accounted for the bulk of the forces at Jackson.

Carfario also makes a significant differentiation between "hot" and "cold" units within the military. A "hot" community consists of men and women who will see front line action as a result of their service. These people train with the knowledge that they will end up in harm's way. Understanding what the future holds directly impacts how these soldiers prepare, interact with each other, and see the world. These soldiers tend to live life in the moment and take their training seriously, but in their off time tend to relax and joke more than other soldiers.⁸¹ By this definition, the Dutch in Jackson represented a "hot" culture. Many of the students had seen combat at some point prior to coming to Jackson, and all were aware that their jobs as airmen would put them in the line of fire. By 1942 the British had conducted a study which concluded that only ten percent of

⁷⁹ Giuseppe Caforio, ed., *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2006), 238.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 247.

bomber pilots would live to complete a full tour of duty.⁸² With that knowledge, as well as their experience fleeing Java, the Dutch were under no illusions as to how hot their jobs were.

On the opposite end of the spectrum are the “cold” military career fields. The bulk of military careers are cold, which means the soldiers serves in a capacity that will not regularly put them in the line of fire. The career field consists of more political and paper battles than traditional combat. These jobs are marked by an environment of power struggles, budget battles, media melees, and political onslaughts.⁸³ This “cold” military culture resembles the culture of the American forces at Jackson while the Dutch were present. The Americans served primarily administrative roles for the Dutch while they were in Jackson, often dealing with local political figures and handling the acquisition of materials essential for the flight school. Those who were not working in offices worked on the flight lines as mechanics who were likely to deploy but were not likely to come in direct contact with hostile enemy forces.

With these vastly different cultures, it may seem as though there would not be many opportunities for there to be a cultural exchange. However, there were several factors that helped mitigate the separation and limited the Dutch isolation. The first is that Americans operated the air control tower.⁸⁴ The tower at Jackson lacked some of the advanced equipment major bases possessed; therefore, the Dutch pilots had to interact regularly with American military personnel while they were in the air.

⁸² Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 108.

⁸³ Caforio, *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, 246.

⁸⁴ “History of the Jackson Army Air Base Department of Training and Operations” (U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), Air Force Historical Research Agency.

The Americans also had a significant amount of influence on the Dutch ground training program. There were two primary components to ground training, the classroom portion, and the Link Trainers. As the Dutch evacuated, they could not afford to bring the bulk of their training materials with them; therefore, they relied heavily on American help to cover the educational aspects of the training program.⁸⁵ Although ground school did not last for a significant amount of time, it was long enough to impact the Dutch flying culture and how they used their aircraft.

The final, and possibly most significant mitigating factor to the Dutch isolation was the transient air traffic that came through Jackson. Transient air traffic is when aircraft stop at a base other than their home base.⁸⁶ These aircraft can come in the form of pilots doing cross-country training, emergency landings, refueling, or crews that must land in order to comply with crew rest regulations. Transient aircraft posed a training limitation to the Dutch because they consumed resources the Dutch needed for training. They were beneficial as the pilots of transient aircraft represented segments of the American military's flying community who, much like their Dutch counterparts, were preparing for war. Nicola Di Cosmo argues that when exposed to different militaries and societies, military culture is bound to change.⁸⁷ With the constant barrage of the American military culture it was impossible for the Dutch not to come out of this joint training environment changed in some way.

⁸⁵ "History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1941-June 1942" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), Air Force Historical Research Agency.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸⁷ Nicola Di Cosmo, ed., *Military Culture in Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 4.

Prior to their arrival in Jackson, the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School had taken on a unique culture from what one would expect to see in a typical training unit. The Dutch took a pragmatic approach to training, and they adopted a mission first approach to teaching new pilots. While training in the Dutch East Indies, the pilots only had two airfields that they had not properly maintained, which severely limited the amount of training they could give their pilots. Compounding that problem was the fact that none of the planes were trainers.⁸⁸ The lack of trainers may not seem like much of an issue, as the principles of flight are the same regardless of airframe; however, the designs of training aircraft have stability in mind, while fighters and bombers do not. Training aircraft have positive static and dynamic stability, which means that if the pilot makes a mistake at the controls, the natural tendency of the plane is to return back to straight and level flight. Stability is particularly important for beginning flyers. Stable planes are more forgiving, and pilots can easily recognize mistakes, but they will generally not develop into catastrophic errors.⁸⁹ As the Dutch did not possess training aircraft, their new pilots had to learn on aircraft that did not possess high levels of static or dynamic stability. One of the goals when designing a fighter aircraft is to make it as unstable as possible, which allows them to maneuver at high speeds and turn with tight angles. The instability of these aircraft allows them to dogfight better; however, it requires that the pilot have an intimate knowledge of the aircraft, because a mistake at the controls could cost them their lives. Thus, the lack of trainers forced the Dutch to adopt a culture unique to other training cultures in two distinct ways.

⁸⁸ "Well Done, Jackson!...", *Netherlands New Digest*, October 15, 1945, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

⁸⁹ John Anderson, *Fundamentals of Aerodynamics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011).

The first is that the Dutch focused far more on in-air performances than test results and classroom performances. The Dutch realized early in their training program in the Dutch East Indies that academics could predict people who would have an intimate knowledge of how an airplane works but could not predict how well an individual would pilot an aircraft. In fact, Andries Bakker, who was serving with the Dutch Navy at the time of the Japanese invasion, had trained to be an aircraft mechanic. However, as war with the Japanese became imminent, the government transferred him to the air force to become an aerial gunner, although he had no formal education on the weapons system.⁹⁰ Bakker's experience showed that the Dutch cared far less about formal academic training and put a heavy emphasis on what one could do in the skies.

Beyond the emphasis on physical performance over academic performance, the Dutch adopted a culture that relied on training accomplished through on the job training rather than in an isolated environment.⁹¹ One of the drawbacks to training like this is that the trainee always has the instructor pilot with them. The constant supervision works against the purpose of pilot training in that the trainee seldom had time to fly the aircraft on their own, establish familiarity with the controls, and could not gain confidence in their ability to perform those functions on their own. The other drawback is that on the job training often skips the stage of training that builds the fundamentals of flying. Because they lacked the fundamentals of flight, many of the pilots lacked the ability to fly in formation, which limits one's ability to contribute to the war effort as formation flying is essential to combat flight. As an American triple ace during World War Two, Bud Anderson identified the single most important trait in a pilot as the ability to fly in

⁹⁰ Andries Bakker, "Memoirs from World War II," n.d., 3, The Mississippi Armed Forces Museum.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

formation, with near perfect precision, and stick to a wingman.⁹² The Dutch lacked the ability to fly in formation, which was a limitation that they needed to overcome before they were could integrate within the joint environment of the combined air offensives in Europe and the Pacific.

Beyond the cultural adaptations the Dutch made due to a lack of equipment, the Dutch training culture also represented a nation that was at war. Therefore, the primary focus of the Dutch was on achieving their mission and doing whatever it took to get back in the fight. The focus for this type of culture comes from the leadership of a unit, and the men and women of a unit reflect the image of their leader. The commander of the Royal Netherlands Flying School, Colonel C. Giebel, possessed a Douglas MacArthur type obsession with returning to his homeland and liberating the Dutch people. During the invasion of the Netherlands, the Nazis capture Giebel twice, and the second time Giebel had to escape from what one article described as a Nazi fortress.⁹³ After leaving Europe, the military stationed Giebel in the Dutch East Indies where he survived aerial combat with the far superior Japanese Zeros prior to the fall of the Dutch in the Pacific. It was on the trip from Australia to the United States that the Dutch named Giebel the commander of the newly formed training school. From his fighting experiences, Colonel Giebel displayed an incredible determination and focus that resonated with the cadets under his command as he rebuilt the decimated air component of the Dutch Air Force.

Along with the focus of Colonel Giebel, the instructor pilots also possessed the same determination. Many of the instructor pilots fought the Japanese in attempts to buy

⁹² Clarence Anderson and Joseph Hamelin, *To Fly and Fight: Memoirs of a Triple Ace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), viii.

⁹³ "Well Done, Jackson!...", 10.

the Dutch more time to evacuate. Several saw their close friends go to the skies and die trying to defend the island of Java and the military forces still trapped on the island.⁹⁴ The pilots had constant reminders of the sacrifices their friends made to enable the Dutch to continue the fight in a foreign land. In fact, Willem Roozeboom recalled the determination he saw from the veteran instructor pilots. Even though Roozeboom only joined the Dutch forces in Jackson, he almost immediately developed the sense of focus and determination the pilots around him possessed.⁹⁵

It is important to note that military defeats make militaries susceptible to looking at their own culture and making changes to that culture that will ensure victory in the future. Wayne Lee points out that defeat “is often cited as a critical motivator of a military system’s or institution’s innovation.”⁹⁶ While defeat does not guarantee that a nation will change how it approaches war, it challenges that nation’s strategies and can serve to inspire leaders to act to prevent further embarrassment on the battlefield. Thus, when the Dutch arrived in Jackson they came with a clear set of goals and a military culture that had experienced a string of defeats going back for May of 1940. With the dogged determination and focus of their battle hardened leadership, the Dutch were ready to adopt whatever they could to defeat their enemies.

Upon their arrival at Jackson, the Dutch came into contact with an American military that was beginning to gear up for the conflict the Dutch had been a part of for two years. As opposed to finding a pragmatic training program that had a focus for on the

⁹⁴ Marjorie Helfrich, Helfrich Interview, February 29, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

⁹⁵ Willem Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview, September 7, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

⁹⁶ Wayne Lee, ed., *Warfare and Culture in World History* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 9.

job training and valued performances in the air, the Dutch encountered the scientific training system of the United States Army Air Forces that used its superior resource base and population to produce as many pilots as possible. The emphasis was on screening and classroom performances prior to an emphasis on the air.

The training program for the United States during World War Two consisted of five primary steps: screening and testing, primary flight training, basic training, basic flight school, and advanced flight school. Arguably the most difficult part of pilot training in the US occurred before a pilot ever reached the plane during the screening and testing phase. Ironically enough, this was the aspect of American military culture that differed the most from the training cultures of the Dutch during the war. Whereas the Dutch did not have the luxury of rejecting men prior to failure in the cockpit, the Army Air Forces weeded out thousands of men before they ever saw the flight line. In order for the military to select someone for consideration for pilot training, one had to first display a high level of intelligence when visiting the recruiting station on his initial evaluations.⁹⁷ The highest scores went to the Army Air Forces, followed by the Navy, and then the Army. Therefore, if one wanted to get the foot in the door, he first had to score above average on his initial screening.

After that, the Army Air Forces conducted a litany of tests both physical and mental that the military meant to evaluate an individual's probability at succeeding within the ranks of the aviation community. The military designed these tests to find men that were "frank, open-faced, pleasant-mannered, serious-minded, and co-operatively-inclined,"⁹⁸ men that generals like Hap Arnold and Ira Eaker wanted in the air next to

⁹⁷ Kennett, *G.I.*, 21.

⁹⁸ Henry Arnold and Ira Eaker, *This Flying Game* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, n.d.).

them. Therefore, the Army Air Forces made a battery of twenty tests based on the traits of twenty legendary pilots from the interwar period.⁹⁹ These tests eliminated the large majority of the men who wanted to become pilots and sometimes caused good pilots to sit on the sidelines. Bob Morgan, a pilot who would achieve national fame as the pilot of the *Memphis Belle*, failed the battery twice due to a weak eye before a flight surgeon allowed him a little extra time to reanalyze the letters on the board.¹⁰⁰ Although gaming the system did not happen often, this particular incident highlights one of the drawbacks to the scientific approach the United States adopted. The tests could eliminate good pilots before they had the chance to prove themselves in the cockpit. While it ensured men were likely to pass the academic portion of the exam, it did not guarantee the best pilots made it to the skies.

If one was to pass the physical and mental screenings he then had to move through the primary flight screening and basic training phases of flight evaluation.¹⁰¹ The primary phase of training occurred in a non-military setting and was meant to evaluate in the air performance, teach the fundamentals of flight, get the trainees to solo their aircraft, and provide the trainees a solid foundation before they attempted to learn how to fly for the military with tight regulations on how and where to fly.¹⁰² If one could learn how to fly in the civilian world, he went to basic military training. Here, the trainee experienced a traditional boot camp many people imagine when they think of the

⁹⁹ Mark Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare: The Allied Aircrew Experience in the Second World War* (Essex: F. Cass, 1995), 7.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Morgan and Ron Powers, *The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle: Memoir of a WWII Bomber Pilot* (New York: Dutton, 2001), 45.

¹⁰¹ "Jackson Army Airbase Yearbook 1942" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942), Air Force Historical Research Agency.

¹⁰² Robin Olds, Christina Olds, and Ed Rasimus, *Fighter Pilot: The Memoirs of Legendary Ace Robin Olds* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010), 15.

military. For many pilots, the saving grace of boot camp was the knowledge that on the other side of the training they would get to fly again. Basic military training had nothing to do with flying an aircraft and was ultimately one of the final major washout points for American pilots. In fact, the yearbook for Jackson Army Air Base referred to the push-ups as “man killers” that washed out more pilots than any other aspect of training.¹⁰³

The final two phases of training were basic and advanced pilot training. Basic pilot training differed from the Dutch training in that it emphasized flying in formations with other aircraft, running through manuals, and flying within patterns at given airfields. Mastering these basic skills allowed pilots to fly at any American military installation in the world. The first phase of training also taught the fundamentals of combat aviation to pilots. The key was that this training happened on the same aircraft, which meant that every pilot who trained in an American program would have the same basic skill sets necessary to wage war in the air.¹⁰⁴ After this basic introduction to military flight, the pilots were track selected into either fighter aircraft or heavy bomber and transportation aircraft. In the advanced stages of flight training, the pilots would narrow down their skill sets in order to perfect the type of flying they would do in combat. Thus, for fighters, there was a heavy emphasis on dogfighting maneuvers and small formation flying. These skills were essential as fighter pilots had more maneuverability and depended on smaller formations to combat enemy aircraft.¹⁰⁵

The advanced flight training for bombers was significantly different in its focus. For these pilots, the emphasis items in training were large formation flying and land

¹⁰³ “Jackson Army Airbase Yearbook 1942.”

¹⁰⁴ “Training of Foreign Nationals by the AAF 1939-1945” (Air Historical Office, 1947), 64, Mississippi Armed Forces Museum.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson and Hamelin, *To Fly and Fight*, 59.

navigation. The importance of large formation flying cannot be understated for a bomber pilot. When conducting a bombing run, the idea during the 1940s was to put as much ordinance as possible on a target because the lack of guidance systems on the aircraft made bombing more of an art than a science. However, as a result of the large number of planes that were required to fly at any given time, formations would be long and drawn out, and they were often layered.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, if a pilot's speed or altitude was off by a little, he could easily fly his aircraft into the planes around him, or even worse, drop his bomb load on a plane flying in formation below his plane. Hence, there was an increased emphasis on land navigation when flying a bomber as opposed to the fighter planes.

Many of the instructor pilots in the United States at the time the Dutch came through Jackson learned how to fly in the interwar period. Because the Americans learned to fly in peace, they were more likely to adhere to a checklist of standards once they were in the air with a curriculum that included clear, measurable samples of behavior in the cockpit. In this sense, the training program, even after it went to the flight line, was an extension of the scientific nature the Americans adopted for the ground school component of the pilot training program. The strict adherence to the standards was not just an American military issue, though. Infantry soldiers recalled how certain training requirements in their routines were not useful once they got to the front lines. Beyond that, the required classroom time and skills evaluations were not measuring skills that would keep the soldiers alive in combat.¹⁰⁷ Thus, even with the vast material resources and immense amounts of manpower, the Dutch came to the United States, and experienced a military culture that was evolving with it as the war continued.

¹⁰⁶ John Buckley, *Air Power in the Age of Total War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 163.

¹⁰⁷ Kennett, *G.I.*, 50.

Maintaining high levels of discipline, though, were not the stereotypical hallmarks of the air component of many militaries. In fact, the Army Air Forces and the British Royal Air Force earned reputations as having officer corps who lacked stringent discipline standards and enjoyed finding ways to rebel against the authority of their nation's army.¹⁰⁸ Although the RAF gained a significant amount of respect during the Battle of Britain, the flyers of the RAF maintained their image as being loose cannons once their planes landed. The same sentiment existed within the American ranks. The liberty pilots felt once they "slipped the surly bonds of Earth"¹⁰⁹ often translated into a more liberal adherence to the traditional military standards once they returned. After all, these men saw themselves as the elite new fighting force, and therefore they did not need to adhere to the antiquated military regulations that dictated how the regular foot soldiers were to conduct themselves.

So what exactly did the Dutch change about their training program? One of the first actions the Dutch took when they came to the United States was to exploit the massive amounts of land. Rudolf Idzerda's lasting impression of the United States was from his train ride from San Francisco to Jackson. To him, the US was the biggest country on the planet, and Texas in particular seemed to never end.¹¹⁰ For a little bit of perspective, Lieutenant Commander Adrianna, a member of the Dutch naval aviation community, gave a speech pointing out that "Holland is but a third as large as Mississippi, and has 9,000,000 inhabitants, so nearly every square yard is cultivated."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Francis, *The Flyer*, 17.

¹⁰⁹ John Magee, "High Flight," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 12, 1941.

¹¹⁰ Rudolf Idzerda, Interview with Rudolf Idzerda, July 26, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

¹¹¹ "Dutch Officer Tells Exchangites of Native Land," n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The lack of natural resources had limited Dutch training and forced them to adapt their training program to those limited resources. With the immense amounts of land at their disposal, the Dutch stationed sub training units at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Midland Army Air Field, Texas, Tyndall Field Florida, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota.¹¹² These substations only represent the largest offsite schools the Dutch maintained. However, if a pilot possessed particularly good English skills, the Dutch would integrate him into an American training program for a short period of time to expedite the training process.

The expanded operations sites did not just enable the Dutch to conduct their operations at a faster pace, but they enabled them to increase the quality of the aviators they were producing. Tyndall Field did not house an air operations unit per se. Instead, the Dutch sent fighter pilot and aerial gunners to Tyndall for a few weeks at a time as part of an air gunners training program. The weapons training was a critical phase of training, too, because if a pilot could not familiarize himself with guns on the ground, the Dutch would drop people from the pilot program and place them in a support role that needed to be filled.¹¹³ Thus, given the resources and the space to conduct multiple operations at the same time without interference from an enemy force, the Dutch were able to raise the quality of the pilots they were producing. They began to lose some of the on the job training and pragmatism they had once needed to build up a sufficient pilot corps in the Dutch East Indies, and they began to adopt a more American, or scientific, culture to training its new aviators.

Along with the increased amount of evaluations, the Dutch began to adopt a more American style approach to their entire training program. The pace with which the Dutch

¹¹² "Training of Foreign Nationals by the AAF 1939-1945," 181.

¹¹³ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

adopted the American style of training is incredible. Marjorie Helfrich worked on Jackson Army Air Base in a supporting role. Helfrich acted as a secretary for the American officers in charge of gathering the supplies that were critical to flight operations. Helfrich recalled, though, that the American officers she worked with had very limited contact with their Dutch counterparts and that she had almost no formal contact with the Dutch, even though she played a critical role acquiring their materials.¹¹⁴

General van Oyen, the commander the Royal Netherlands Air Forces, and Colonel Giebel, had been in constant contact with the commanders of the Southeast Training Region and developed a training program that would fit their needs. By the time the Dutch came to Jackson, the Southeast Training Region in particular had a history of training foreign nationals. John Turner, a British pilot trainee, came to the United States in order to complete his training in safety. Unlike the Dutch, Turner trained in an exclusively American training system.¹¹⁵ This marked a turning point in the British mindset toward American pilot training. In mid-1941 the British felt that the United States did a poor job training pilots for combat. At the outbreak of the war, the British had seen the American program as inferior and incapable of training quality pilots.¹¹⁶ Part of this stemmed from the lack of American materiel available when Britain first went to war with Nazi Germany. The other aspect that gave the British hesitation about the American training program was that the instructors had almost no experience flying their aircraft in combat. However, the scientific approach proved to be giving the pilots of the Royal Air Force a quality background in military aviation with a solid foundation in the

¹¹⁴ Helfrich, Helfrich Interview.

¹¹⁵ John Turner, "John Turner Collection," n.d., Air Force Historical Research Agency.

¹¹⁶ Tom Killebrew, *The Royal Air Force in Texas: Training British Pilots in Terrell during World War II* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2003), 8.

fundamentals of proper flight. Thus, the British continued to send pilots like John Turner to the US for training.

Adopting the scientific approach the US took to training was only the first step in many cultural interactions that would define the Dutch tenure at Jackson. Once the Dutch adopted the American training system, they had to relearn how to fly. The first, and quite possibly most difficult, aspect of relearning how to fly came from the American military's culture of accountability. The new emphasis on accountability meant that while flying the Dutch had to make frequent radio calls to the control towers about all of their actions, where they were, and their mission plans.¹¹⁷ As the Dutch only had one fully operational base in the Dutch East Indies, the military deemed such radio calls as excessive and were neither required nor regulated. In fact, the amount of radio calls required gave most foreign pilots issues, as John Turner recalled.¹¹⁸ There were requirements on the proper wording for radio calls, where pilots were supposed to make radio calls both on the ground and in the air, and what occurrences in flight warranted a special radio call.

The radio calls did not just represent a challenge for the Dutch trainees, but they were also a major change for the instructor pilots who had to learn how to be accountable in the air. The Dutch noted that the radio control operators at Jackson were incredibly patient and even calmer under pressure than most control tower operators.¹¹⁹ The radio operators were used to listening and waiting for the Dutch to make their radio calls, and they had several close calls as both instructors and trainees missed radio calls over the

¹¹⁷ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

¹¹⁸ Turner, "John Turner Collection."

¹¹⁹ "History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1941-June 1942," 21.

first few months. Although none of the sources state exactly what some of the close calls were, as there were never any accidents at the airfield, the value of maintaining accountability of one's aircraft at all times was imparted to the Dutch from day one.

One of the unique military challenges that stemmed from the radio calls, too, was the language barrier. By 1942, international commercial flights were not common, and a language standard for aviation had yet to be put in place. Thus, many of the Dutch barely spoke any English, much less understood some of the radio calls necessary to fly safely in American airspace. Willem Roozeboom recalled that many of his counterparts were more nervous about learning the English language for their radio calls than they were about meeting the local girls.¹²⁰ While breaching the language barrier occurred slowly, the Director of Training and Operations noted that if it were not for the Dutch accents, they would have been indistinguishable from American pilots in the skies.¹²¹

Unfortunately, not every American was patient with the language barrier when the Dutch came to their town. Marjorie Helfrich recalled one such incident when her soon to be husband, Jan Helfrich, was on a cross-country training trip to El Paso, Texas. One of the key components to a pilot's training is to leave the training base and fly to various points around the country to experience how different bases operate in order to practice what they have learned to use at different bases. Generally, this occurred near the end of a training cycle, and the trainee and instructor pilot had time to relax in between flights and to form a more personal connection. Jan and his instructor were taking the afternoon off, and the hotel they were staying at called the local authorities as two tall Germanic

¹²⁰ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

¹²¹ "History of the Physical Training Department Jackson Army Air Base" (U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), 151, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

looking men speaking a strange language were lounging around the pool area in a military town. Instead of being up front with the authorities when they came to the hotel, Jan and his instructor told the FBI that they were the escorts of a Mexican admiral conducting business in El Paso.¹²² Unfortunately, the humor was lost on the federal agents, who conducted a night long search of their aircraft and almost prevented the two men from taking off the next day to continue their cross-country flights. Although the language barrier is what inspired Jan and his instructor to joke with the authorities, they quickly learned that outside the joint training environment, people were not as patient or forgiving.

The final aspect of training the Dutch had to adapt to was the organized approach the Army Air Forces had of flying. The clearest manifestation of that is in the pattern flying the US forced the Dutch to adopt when operating near their bases. In Java, the Dutch when approaching an airfield made a straight line approach that extended for miles.¹²³ The system of flying, while easy to learn, offered no tactical advantages and made it incredibly difficult for the air traffic controllers to manage and prioritize flights that may be experiencing emergencies. The pattern approaches forced the pilots to fly in a square with multiple entry and exit points based of emergencies that may arise and landing precedence. Again, the Dutch abandoned their antiquated style of flying for a more advanced and efficient model. The Dutch adopted the more scientific and methodological approach, which they maintained even after the war.

The Dutch and the Americans did not limit their interactions to the flight line operations. They had many interactions on the athletic fields as well. Immediately upon

¹²² Helfrich, Helfrich Interview.

¹²³ "Dutch Air Force in the East Indies, 1937," n.d., Air Force Historical Research Agency.

their arrival at the base, the Dutch enlisted the help of the Americans in modeling a physical training program for the pilot trainees.¹²⁴ The primary fears of the commanders were that their men were becoming soft due to the long hours of transit via trains and ships. What truly inspired the Dutch to ask for American assistance was the incredibly high level of physical conditioning the units at Jackson had when the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School got to the base. What was particularly telling of this was the fact that the finance squadron maintained a record of its physical training and boasted that all of its personnel met or exceeded the standards of the Army Air Forces.¹²⁵

Prior to the Dutch arriving in Jackson, Lieutenant Thompson spent large portions of the Physical Training Department's budget acquiring a portable boxing ring, renovating gyms in the Jackson area, and investing in land on base that would later be turned into athletic fields for baseball and football.¹²⁶ The report of the physical training program at Jackson Army Air Base also noted that commanders posted the standards throughout the base, and the units stationed at the base had to make a concerted effort to achieve the levels of physical fitness mandated by the Army Air Forces. The physical training program used at Jackson rested on three principles: cardio, team sports, and calisthenics. The training department require each unit to do cardio every duty day, and the training program designated Wednesday as a day dedicated exclusively to cardio. On Mondays and Thursdays, the units performed a robust calisthenics routine to accompany a short cardio workout. On Tuesdays and Fridays, the units played team sports in lieu of

¹²⁴ "History of the Physical Training Department Jackson Army Air Base," 44.

¹²⁵ "Jackson Army Air Base Financial Department" (U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), Air Force Historical Research Agency.

¹²⁶ "History of the Physical Training Department Jackson Army Air Base," 1.

the calisthenics work.¹²⁷ The sports that the American military played most often were baseball and football, both of which built physical prowess and teamwork. In fact, baseball was such a popular sport with the Americans that they fielded a team that competed against some of the various military units in the local area.¹²⁸

The Dutch leadership liked what they saw with regards to the organization and routine of the American physical training program. The Dutch began to bring in their own instructors almost immediately; however, those instructors maintained the same general structure of the American physical fitness system. However, the Dutch did not blindly accept every part of the American system. The Dutch units, when given the discretion to play sports, often opted to play traditional European sports as opposed to American ones. While both nations played sports that were team oriented, there were key differences that often highlighted each nation's military culture. The American sports of football and baseball are highly organized, and every player has a given position and a defined amount of roles they can perform. There is a clear reset after every play is completed, and the coaches exert a great deal of influence over the course of the game. There is also a clear offensive and defensive role for the players on the field. The creators of the games used the organization to make the games less European and to enable gamblers to place bets more frequently; it served military's goals because it raised teamwork, and fostered a competitive spirit.¹²⁹

The Dutch, however, enjoyed different sports than their American counterparts. The most popular games were soccer and field hockey, both of which the Dutch played

¹²⁷ "Jackson Army Air Base Financial Department."

¹²⁸ "History of the Physical Training Department Jackson Army Air Base," 23.

¹²⁹ Benjamin Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2009), 65.

on a football field.¹³⁰ These games also reflected the military of the Dutch military better than the American competitions. Both of these sports are more fluid games with offensive and defensive players from the same team taking the field at the same time. There are no clear stops in the game after every play, and the players, depending on the position of the ball and other factors could change from the attack to the defense in a matter of seconds. The fluidity in these sports reflects the pragmatic approach the Dutch had with their military. The pilots would fly a mission to provide aid to an isolated group in the Dutch East Indies, and at the same time, they would perform the duties of training the next pilot trainee.

Also, which sports the Dutch chose to play was not going to change the ultimate long or short term mission readiness of their trainees. Therefore, by maintaining their native sports, the Dutch were able to maintain an identity separate from that of their host nation. Playing these sports served as a daily reminder to the Dutch of who they were and what they were training for.

For the Dutch, not all of the adaptations they made had a direct military correlation. As was mentioned earlier, Jackson Army Air Base served as a hub in the Southeast for transient aircraft that were travelling across the nation. As a result, the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School had a multitude of encounters with American pilots who were returning from tours of duty in Europe or were leaving to begin a tour of duty. Thus, the Dutch experienced the wild individualism that existed within the cold science based pilot training system their country was adopting. One of the most popular ways for a pilot to display his individualism was through “buzzing.” Buzzing is a simple

¹³⁰ “History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943,” 49.

concept that can become incredibly dangerous depending on how confident the pilot is in his abilities. The underlying concept is that a pilot would find an object on the ground, most often a house, road, or bridge and fly as close and fast to said object as he could. Buzzing was something that almost every pilot did for fun or to impress the ladies from time to time.

American pilots, though, took to this habit with more enthusiasm than almost any other nation. Triple ace Bud Anderson recalled one of the most impressive buzzings he ever saw while he was training to become a fighter pilot. It was his day off, and he and some members of the squadron piled into his Mustang to go explore the desert near his base. While he was driving well over the speed limit, he heard a rumbling behind him. Not knowing what was making the noise, he looked in his rearview mirror to see the cockpit of a P-51 nearly at eye level with him. Instinctively, he careened his car off the road to avoid being run over by one of his friends who recognized his car from above.¹³¹

What made this practice so widespread was that any pilot could buzz anywhere in any type of plane, and every unit had tales of one particular incident they were sure to retell whenever they were given the opportunity. What compounded the issue was that tracking systems were not very robust at this point in time, and monitoring the actions of individual planes was still hard to do. Beyond that though, many of the leaders of the Army Air Forces at this time considered themselves the mavericks from the days of Billy Mitchell and sought to highlight the prowess and individuality of their men whenever they could.¹³² In fact, General Henry “Hap” Arnold, commander of the US Army Air Forces, ordered the crew of the *Memphis Belle* to buzz the airport in Washington DC

¹³¹ Anderson and Hamelin, *To Fly and Fight*, 55.

¹³² Henry Harley Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), 122.

when the crew arrived from their tour of duty. With that order, Bob Morgan took the liberty of buzzing the airfield multiple times, garnering praises from everyone in attendance for the incredible display of airmanship.¹³³ Even though the practice of buzzing was officially frowned upon by military regulations, the stunt was common, and the men who pushed the limits of buzzing became legends as the stories passed from base to base.

Although none of the Dutch pilots recalled exactly which American introduced them to the concept of buzzing, they agreed that once they learned, the Dutch elevated the high flying daredevil acts and became legends in the Jackson area. Initially, the Dutch began small; they would buzz fields or the houses of some girls they were trying to impress, nothing that would cause someone to complain too much. However, the Dutch became bolder as time went on, and they began to buzz schools and factories where their girlfriends worked. The practice of buzzing created quite the stir every time the Dutch flew overhead, as the girls wanted to try to see if it was their Dutchman who was flying by to say hello. In fact, one school's principal was so enraged by the constant buzzing of his school that he called the commander of the Royal Netherlands Flying School only to have Colonel Giebel respond, "Our boys are good boys, they don't do that."¹³⁴ Even though Colonel Giebel knew his pilots buzzed schools, he understood it was a healthy way to release the stress brought on by training in a foreign environment. However, the Dutch did not stop their buzzing activities at schools and homes.

¹³³ Morgan and Powers, *The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle*, 219.

¹³⁴ Sherry Lucas, "Dutch Pilot Revisits 'Sweet Memories,'" *The Clarion-Ledger*, March 28, 2006, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Indeed, according to Rudolf Idzerda, if one wanted to distinguish himself from his colleagues, he would buzz the Vicksburg Bridge. However, buzzing did not mean flying over the bridge to scare the crossing traffic. In order to buzz the Vicksburg Bridge successfully, the pilot had to fly his aircraft under the bridge without hitting the bridge or landing in the water.¹³⁵ Buzzing the bridge was an incredibly dangerous maneuver that only a few of the bravest pilots ever attempted. Although Willem Roozeboom fancied himself one of the best fighter pilots in Jackson, he never attempted to buzz the Vicksburg Bridge. By the time Roozeboom heard about buzzing the bridge, he was already in trouble for having a fake dogfight over downtown Kansas City, and flying close enough to a hotel during said dogfight, he violently rattled the windows.¹³⁶ Although Roozeboom understood he had to remain straight laced for the remainder of pilot training, he recalled that he would not have done it regardless. Even though it is impossible to pinpoint when the Dutch started buzzing, what is significant in that buzzing gave the Dutch a release from the stress of war and the thought of having lost all of their land to both the Nazis and the Japanese. The act of buzzing shows that even while the Dutch system was becoming more scientific and American, the Dutch pilots were able to maintain their morale, which is critical with the intense training workload the Dutch maintained.

Another aspect of Dutch military culture that changed, even though its change had little to do with the future success of military operations, was the softening of the distinctions the Dutch made between officers and enlisted personnel. When the Dutch first came to Jackson, they insisted that the Americans create a separate mess for officers,

¹³⁵ Idzerda, Interview with Rudolf Idzerda.

¹³⁶ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

even though there was already an officers' club on base.¹³⁷ While rank distinctions were important to the United States military, too, as evidenced by the litany of non-fraternization regulations, certain areas, like the mess, were places where officers could interact with their troops in a less formal setting. Although the frugality of the US forced the Dutch to adapt to this hierarchical structure while they were in Jackson, this was one change to their military culture the Dutch chose not to maintain. Once the Dutch pilots returned to Australia, the segregation by rank began anew. At the movie screen on base in Australia, the officers were the only ones allowed to sit in chairs, while the enlisted men had to sit on the ground and compete for the best view.¹³⁸

The reasons why the Dutch adopted some of the aspects of American military culture and rejected others dealt primarily with the history associated with some aspects of the Dutch military. Because aircraft had not been a part of warfare for a long time, there were no truly set traditions for pilots. In an attempt to identify who they were, Dutch aviators took their cues from other pilots adopting traditions they liked to perform. Along with the fact that it was incredibly difficult to monitor the actions of pilots when they were away from the base, the new traditions did not displace any deep-seated cultural traditions.

However, traditions like the highly segregated military hierarchy were far more difficult to change. The Dutch military has a proud and storied history. All branches took pride in the history of the Dutch military and often saw themselves as lions defending the Netherlands. In a poem written about the Dutch military, the final stanza concludes, "The

¹³⁷ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943," 12.

¹³⁸ Otto Ward, "Life and Work in the 18 Squadron NEI," n.d., 10, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Lion will preserve our Holland, His sword and his crown And faithful unto death Guard the people and the throne.”¹³⁹ Part of that rich military tradition was a hierarchical system based on rank that created sharp and clear distinctions between the officers and the members of the enlisted corps. Therefore, the changes in the Dutch military culture that impacted traditions that extended beyond the creation of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School were much more difficult to change.

In that same vein, the Dutch military made significant changes to its culture in spite of the US. As the Dutch were training pilots prior to losing the Dutch East Indies, some trainees came to Jackson far more advanced than others. As a result, the Dutch graduated three separate classes between September 1942 and February 1944.¹⁴⁰ These airmen went from living in the lap of luxury in Jackson to largely relegated to the sidelines in the Pacific theatre. Instead of having a formal base, the Allies gave the Royal Netherlands Air Force a small spit of relatively flat land, and the Allies told the Dutch they would be conducting operations from that position.¹⁴¹ With forces composed largely of recent Royal Netherlands Military Flying School graduates, the Dutch military adopted a hybrid of the American scientific method, with their prior pragmatic and simple approach to conducting military operations. These Dutch aviators cleared their own land designing a simple yet effective airfield that allowed them to fly multiple patterns both in and out of the field.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ “Royal Netherlands Military Flying School in the United States,” 1945, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

¹⁴⁰ “History of the Army Air Force’s Specialized Training School JAAB” (U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), Air Force Historical Research Agency.

¹⁴¹ Ward, “Life and Work in the 18 Squadron NEI,” 7.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

Had the Americans provided all of the necessary materials, the end result would have been the same, as the Dutch began to make contributions to the war effort. However, they would not have been able to apply the complex lessons they learned at Jackson. The Dutch, once they returned to the field, quickly found themselves working with the limited resources their country had to offer. As opposed to falling back into their old traditions, the Dutch modified the American method to fit the reality of their military situation. In doing this, the Dutch displayed the adaptability of their young air force's culture and the Dutch leadership's desire to make the air force a viable unit into the future.

There are also several aspects of the US Army Air Forces culture that the majority of the Dutch never adopted. One of the most noticeable things the Dutch did not adopt was the American tradition of decorating aircraft with nose art. The practice of decorating one's aircraft served a multitude of purposes, but of paramount importance was the boost it gave to the morale of the airmen associated with that aircraft. Plane names like *Memphis Belle*, *Glamorous Glennis*, *Enola Gay*, *Bockscar*, and *Old Crow* have gone down in Air Force history for achieving particularly incredible feats in the air. Although the names on the planes "frequently displayed a healthy regard for the opposite sex,"¹⁴³ they often served as a constant reminder for what the aviators were fighting for back home. To some, it was a girlfriend who helped them maintain a positive outlook on life when the casualties for some bomber units exceeded fifty percent on a tour of duty.¹⁴⁴ For others, the name was simply something simple they thought would keep them grounded

¹⁴³ Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

throughout the conflict.¹⁴⁵ Whatever the inspiration for the name and nose art was, it was evident that it only helped the morale of the American pilots.

For the most part, the Dutch did not participate in this tradition. Although some did name their aircraft, like the crew of the *Pistol Packing Mama*, the majority of the Dutch neither named their aircraft nor talked about their aircraft in intimate terms like the Americans did.¹⁴⁶ There could be several possible explanations for why the Dutch did not adopt the practice. The first is that they did not see the planes as being theirs. Although the Dutch insisted on paying for all of their aircraft and training materials, they used distinctly American planes.¹⁴⁷ As the planes were not Dutch, there was an underlying sentiment that the Dutch did not truly possess the aircraft. Thus, it felt almost inappropriate for them to name the aircraft. Along with the economic view was the fact that there were more aircrews than there were aircraft. Thus, putting one's individual mark on the aircraft seemed to be bad form. Due to the lack of resources the Dutch possessed, the communal aspect of the aircraft served to reinforce the concept of a unified struggle to liberate their homeland.

The more likely reason, though, is that the naming of a plane served to remind an aircrew of why they were fighting, and thoughts of home may have been too painful for most. A majority of the pilots in the Royal Netherlands Air Force had not seen or spoken to their families in months, and they were under no illusions of what life for their families was like. Jan Veenstra had not been part of the military prior to the Nazi invasion. When the Netherlands capitulated, he was at home with his family and was stuck there as the

¹⁴⁵ Anderson and Hamelin, *To Fly and Fight*.

¹⁴⁶ Ward, "Life and Work in the 18 Squadron NEI," 17.

¹⁴⁷ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943," 5.

Nazis occupied his town. However, in a daring move, which Veenstra knew endangered his family, Veenstra fled the Netherlands to France and escaped from Portugal traveling through Cuba on his way to the US.¹⁴⁸ Veenstra had been under Nazi occupation and knew that his family did not stand a good chance of surviving unscathed once the Germans realized he escaped. Therefore, he often preferred not to dwell on thoughts of his family while in training and combat.

Similarly, the pilots who left the Dutch East Indies did not have high hopes for the ultimate fates of their families. Leonie Phefferkorn, whose brother was training in Jackson, was interred by the Japanese with her children not long after the Dutch military evacuated. The conditions she endured with her young children were horrendous, and it was a small miracle that her child survived. Although her brother had no direct knowledge of her condition, rumors about the treatment of Dutch detainees in the Pacific circulated the training camps.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, no matter where the Dutch trainees came from, they knew their loved ones were surviving in horrendous conditions. Nose art, which served as a reminder of home every time the aircrews went on a mission would not have boosted the morale of the unit. As a result, few Dutch aviators chose to decorate their aircraft, and the few who did choose to decorate their aircraft chose American themes, like *Pistol Packing Mama*.

One final aspect of the American military culture the Dutch did not adopt wholeheartedly was the rampant consumption of alcohol. American fighter pilots began the tradition of drinking after earning confirmed kills during World War One, and the

¹⁴⁸ Jacob Veenstra and Jo Veenstra, Interview about Jan Veenstra, n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

¹⁴⁹ Leonie Phefferkorn, Interview with Leonie Phefferkorn, n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

tradition continued into World War Two. The tradition, though, did not stay within the fighter community, and spread to all aircraft platforms and eventually the service as a whole.¹⁵⁰ While the Army Air Forces maintained strict physical fitness standards, it seems that once aircrew went to operational units, the emphasis on physical training decreased significantly, and the importance of developing a robust liver rose exponentially. The habit of drinking continued into deployments as well; as Bob Morgan recalled the maximum physical training he did while deployed to England involved lifting a bottle of Scotch to pour himself another drink after a mission.¹⁵¹ With the high levels of transient aircraft flying through Jackson, the Dutch saw the American drinking culture, but they never took up the practice.

Several factors may have impacted the lack of alcohol consumption. The most obvious is that the Dutch were operating at a training base, and the amount of sorties each trainee flew was of the utmost importance. During World War Two, the Southeast Training Region had an explicit twelve hour “bottle to throttle” rule.¹⁵² The rule established that no person could operate an aircraft for a minimum of twelve hours after their last drink. With morning formations at 0700, and first flights not long after that, there was almost no time a trainee could go drink without falling far behind his peers in the training program.¹⁵³

Also, most of the aircrews went to Australia once they finished their training. Alcohol in Australia was incredibly difficult to come by during the war. Lines in American bases would build up long before distributions were to occur, as nobody

¹⁵⁰ Anderson and Hamelin, *To Fly and Fight*, 100.

¹⁵¹ Morgan and Powers, *The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle*, 139.

¹⁵² Turner, “John Turner Collection.”

¹⁵³ Ben Stubbs, “Dutch Fliers,” n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

wanted to miss an opportunity to acquire the increasingly rare alcohol allotments.¹⁵⁴ As the Dutch occupied a small outpost when compared to the American and Australian bases, it is clear that their base would be one of the last to receive alcohol rations if they received any at all. Therefore, the drinking culture of the Army Air Forces never truly took root with the Dutch during the war.

When two groups with different cultures come together, there is bound to be an exchange of traditions and ideas that will leave both altered in some way. Due to the small overall size of the Dutch force in Jackson, the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School saw far more changes to its traditions and culture than the United States Army Air Forces saw to theirs. While they were in Jackson, the Dutch adopted a far more scientific and calculated approach to the flying and flight training, as these adjustments would help them succeed in both the long and short terms. These changes manifested themselves in increased testing of the pilots on the ground, higher standards while flying, and an established curriculum of measurable samples of behavior that laid a solid foundation in fundamental aviation skills for the Dutch pilots. The Dutch also changed their physical training program to mirror the successful fitness program the Americans had at the base. However, the Dutch did not adopt all of the American program's parts and integrated more European style sports when the Americans played baseball and football.

The Dutch, however, did not accept every part of the American military culture they experienced. Long standing traditions such as the highly segregated officer and enlisted corps, while challenged in Jackson, ultimately made it through the war intact. The Dutch did not integrate the American traditions of drinking or nose art into their

¹⁵⁴ René Armstrong, *Wings and a Ring: Letters of War and Love from a WWII Pilot* (Mustang: Tate Publishing & Enterprises, 2011).

military culture either. While there are a plethora of reasons why the Dutch did not adopt those practices during the war, neither tradition impacted the Dutch capacity to fly and fight effectively. On the whole, the military culture of the Royal Netherlands Air Force benefited greatly from the experiences at Jackson, making it a more complex and efficient force than it would have been without foreign aid.

CHAPTER IV

THE CULTURE EXCHANGE WITH JACKSON

One of the most poignant images in poetry comes from John Donne's *Meditation XVII*. "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is less, as well as if promontory were as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."¹⁵⁵ John Donne creates an image of how all humanity is connected, and no matter how distant or insignificant one may seem, he is part of a larger humanity. As such, Donne emphasizes the interconnectedness of all men, no matter how different they may seem.

There are a plethora of accounts from World War Two of men causing the bells to toll across Europe and Asia, but fewer stories that celebrate the unity people can find in dark times. Jackson, Mississippi hosted an experiment where people from different backgrounds could come together and grow, even when warfare was tearing clods off of Europe at an astounding rate. Home of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School, the Dutch trained at the Jackson Army Air Base so they could return to the fight and liberate their homeland. However, the Dutch did not stay on the base at all times, and they often went into Jackson, interacted with the locals, and made bonds that went beyond a purely military experience. The similarities between these two nations brought them together, the unique experiences and interactions made them intimate allies, and the sacrifices made by both groups made an inseparable bond that is apparent in Jackson to this day.

¹⁵⁵ John Donne, *John Donne: Selections from Divine Poems, Sermons, Devotions, and Prayers* (Paulist Press, 1990), 58.

The Dutch arrived in Jackson in the middle of the night with little fanfare. Lucille Gainey recalled that she was unaware the foreigners had arrived until the following day when somebody mentioned their arrival in passing.¹⁵⁶ After their arrival, the Dutch formed up in several ranks and marched down Capitol Street, walking the last part of their journey to the barracks at the Jackson Army Air Base.¹⁵⁷ It was on this march, too, that the Dutch first captured the intrigue and imagination of the local Jacksonians. Martin Francis claims that one of the most distinguishing aspects of a military force is their uniform. For the British, the powder blue uniforms with pilot wings emblazoned on the chest were iconic and compensated for physical disfigurement that may have resulted from battle.¹⁵⁸ Unlike their British counterparts, the Dutch did not inspire awe, but curiosity. In the Dutch formation, every person wore a different uniform, some mixing uniforms as they were unable to maintain a complete uniform in their retreat from the Dutch East Indies. The most talked about difference between the Dutch and the typical American uniforms is that the Dutch allowed shorts as an acceptable military uniform.¹⁵⁹ No American uniform in any service used shorts, unless the troops were doing physical training. The moment the Dutch stepped off the train in Jackson, the differences were noticeable. Although a majority of Jackson was not there to witness their marching through the state capitol, rumors of the tall foreigners with unique uniforms quickly spread throughout the town. In under two years, the Dutch went from being curious strangers to becoming some of the most cherished members of the community.

¹⁵⁶ Lucille Gainey, Gainey Interview, August 16, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

¹⁵⁷ Frances Baker, "Long Trek from War Area Ended at Jackson Army Air Base," *Jackson Daily News*, May 8, 1946, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

¹⁵⁸ Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25.

¹⁵⁹ Marjorie Helfrich, Helfrich Interview, February 29, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The Dutchmen often “stood out like measles” in Sunday church services around the town, and the people of Jackson quickly learned that these men and women came from a unique culture that they found fascinating.¹⁶⁰ To understand the interactions between these two groups, it is important to have a proper understanding of what Dutch culture was like when they began training. One of the defining characteristics of a people is how they structure their government. To the delight of Jacksonians, the Dutch had one of the most democratic forms of government in Europe.¹⁶¹ The Dutch maintained a constitutional monarchy similar to that of their close trading partner, Great Britain. Unlike the majority of constitutional monarchies though, the Dutch royal family gave up all political power in the Constitution of 1848. The royal family acts as a figurehead in the government, and is incapable of affecting change in the nation without the consent of the cabinet.¹⁶² The “Cabinet of Ministers” is a group of elected representatives who form the primary legislative body for the Dutch people. Although the royal family initiates ceremonies and the start of legislative sessions, the true power lies with the cabinet which establishes the budget and writes the laws.¹⁶³ Thus, the people of the Netherlands possess the power, and the Crown only serves ceremonial roles.

Beyond the power of the government resting with the people, the Dutch shared similar political struggles and views with their American counterparts. Neither country was particularly keen on granting universal male suffrage for extended periods of time. The Dutch did not extend full male suffrage until 1917, and suffrage for females followed

¹⁶⁰ Bette Barber, “It Is Suggested May 8 Be Observed As Special Day In Jackson Marking 11th Anniversary Of Big Invasion,” *Jackson Daily News*, April 12, 1953.

¹⁶¹ “Dutch Officer Tells Exchangites of Native Land,” n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

¹⁶² Emmeline Besamusca and Jaap Verheul, eds., *Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 22.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.

shortly after.¹⁶⁴ As the constitutional monarchy was still young at this point in time, founded in 1848, the right for all males to vote occurred in a shorter timeframe than in the United States. The Americans in Jackson could identify with many of the same struggles the Dutch endured, which was critical to the success of the joint training operation. By seeing a fellow democratic people conquered by the invasions of both the Nazis and Japanese, the Americans, also struggling, saw a group of people with whom they could empathize. Thus, the similar forms of government helped bring the Jacksonians and the trainees of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School together and forge a strong connection.

Looking beyond politics and government, though, the national character of the Dutch people was similar to that of the Americans in Jackson. First, the Dutch were an incredibly frugal people; very conservative with their money. The frugality is apparent by the Dutch government, which would only use materials it could purchase with the money the crown had in its treasury.¹⁶⁵ A number of people who traveled through the Netherlands prior to World War Two also noted this trait. Frugality is not a quality one would typically associate with a nation that maintained large colonies. The Dutch valued thrift above most other qualities, associating those who took care of their fortunes as responsible men. One scholar noted that a Dutchman would not make an investment unless someone guaranteed him a profit.¹⁶⁶ Thrift was not a typical trait amongst colonial

¹⁶⁴ J.A. Kossmann-Putto and E.H Kossmann, *Low Countries: History of the Northern and Southern Netherlands*, 3rd edition (Rekkem: Flemish-Netherlands Foundation, 1991), 51.

¹⁶⁵ "History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 13, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

¹⁶⁶ Adriaan Barnouw, *The Dutch: A Portrait Study of the People of Holland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 21.

empires, and it went a long way toward helping the Dutch connect with the native Jacksonians.

According to C. Vann Woodward, one of the defining characteristics of the South after Reconstruction was persistent and widespread poverty.¹⁶⁷ The South's economy was based on a credit system, which relied on the price of cotton sales. Unfortunately, market prices on cotton slowly bottomed out, so few people in the South made large economic gains in the post-Civil War era.¹⁶⁸ As a result, a majority of Southerners valued the idea of frugality, as it helped families survive on incomes that were below the national average. The Dutch and Jacksonians did not come from the same economic background, which should have created tension between the two. However, as both groups shared similar feelings on the practice of spending money, when the two nations came together, they could easily connect.

The Dutch were also able to connect effectively with the Jacksonians through their adventurous spirit. As one Dutch pilot put it, the Netherlands is roughly half the size of West Virginia and had a significantly larger population.¹⁶⁹ As a result, the Dutch sought every opportunity they could to expand Dutch lands in an attempt to carve out an area for the expanding Dutch population. Dutch pilot Willem Roozeboom recalled that his father answered the Dutch government's offer to populate and cultivate land abroad. The Roozebooms went to the lightly populated British Columbian wilderness to start a farm, as Willem's dad was unable to afford land in his native Netherlands.¹⁷⁰ Although

¹⁶⁷ C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, Updated Third Edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 196.

¹⁶⁸ Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War*, Louisiana Paperback Edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

¹⁶⁹ "Dutch Officer Tells Exchangites of Native Land."

¹⁷⁰ Willem Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview, September 7, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

this was not an opportunity to expand Dutch territory, as the Canadians needed more people to cultivate their land and sought help from overpopulated nations like the Netherlands, it does highlight the adventurous spirit the Dutch possessed, emphasizing that it did not die out with the era of sea exploration.

Mississippi was also a land populated by families of the frontier with an adventurous spirit. Prior to the Civil War, most of the fertile Mississippi Delta had yet to be cultivated, and people still saw Mississippi as a frontier. Therefore, the families who moved to, and lived in, Mississippi possessed an adventurous spirit. Mississippians highlighted their adventurous spirit through the creation of several airfields in the Jackson area. Although Atlanta was selected as the major air traffic hub for commercial flights in the Southeast, the avid air enthusiasm of the locals made Jackson Atlanta's chief rival in the selection process.¹⁷¹ Therefore, the people of Jackson displayed another similarity to the Dutch. The adventurous spirit of the locals helped bring Jacksonians closer to their Dutch neighbors more than would appear possible on the surface.

These common characteristics would have been worthless, though, had the Dutch and the local population never interacted. Fortunately for the Dutch, the city of Jackson was near Jackson Army Air Base, and the town made every effort to ensure their exile was as enjoyable as possible. One of the biggest aspects of Dutch culture is the people's connection to the water. The Netherlands are known in French as *Pays-Bas*, which literally translates to "Low Countries." As indicated by the French name, the Netherlands occupy some of the lowest inhabitable lands in continental Europe. Thus, where land and water begin and end are often indistinguishable. Three rivers terminate in the

¹⁷¹ "History of the Army Air Force's Specialized Training School JAAB" (U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), Air Force Historical Research Agency.

Netherlands: the Rhine, Meuse, and Schelde. The Netherlands are home to two of Europe's biggest ports: Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and the canals that cross the country are major tourist attractions.¹⁷²

Beyond the water within the country, the Dutch people were intimate with the sea, too. Due to their small land holdings in Europe, the Dutch had to rely on trade and maritime endeavors to increase the value of their land. From the people's intimate connection with the water, the Dutch were able to project their power into the Pacific, claiming resource rich islands as their own.¹⁷³ For the Dutch, the connection with the water was a hallmark of their culture. Because it was everywhere, the children grew up around it, played in it, and more than any other feature, windmills and tulips included, the water came to symbolize home. Thus, any type of water would be a welcomed boost for Dutch morale.

People do not generally see Jackson as a hotspot for lakes and water sports. However, the locals put great effort into helping the Dutch gain access to water during their time off. To further this endeavor, Jacksonians frequently put ads in the base papers advertising local lakes as a place to hang out.¹⁷⁴ One of the most popular and well-advertised lakes in the region was Livingston Lake. Although it could hardly compare to the amount of water the Dutch were accustomed to, the lake quickly became a favorite place for the Dutch to relax. It became so popular that the Dutch began bringing dates to the area, and some of the first romantic encounters between the Dutch pilots and the girls of Jackson allegedly started there.¹⁷⁵ In one of the earliest issues of the Dutch newsletter

¹⁷² *The CIA World Factbook 2014* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013).

¹⁷³ Besamusca and Verheul, *Discovering the Dutch*, 98.

¹⁷⁴ "Livingston Lake," *Air Base News*, April 1, 1942, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

¹⁷⁵ "Remous, 1943," 1943, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Remous, a girlfriend of one of the Dutchmen wrote a love poem detailing the importance of Livingston Lake in their young relationship.¹⁷⁶ The Dutch pilots also enjoyed knowing where the beaches were because they knew the girls who went to the beaches at the lakes, and enjoyed flying low over them, especially when they were “not necessarily totally robbed.”¹⁷⁷ The local Jacksonians made a significant effort to help accommodate the Dutch. Even though there were not many lakes around, there was a concerted effort to make Jackson feel like home to the pilots. Through acts like this, the Dutch were able to integrate with the people of Jackson in ways they could not have anticipated.

One of the most popular forms of entertainment when the Dutch came to Jackson was to hold a dance. The fun, open atmosphere allowed for men and women to meet each other, relax, and forget about the problems of the war. Martin Francis noted that the dances were particularly important to men engaged in air warfare. Although he studied British pilots in the Royal Air Force, the idea also held true for the Dutch in Jackson. The pilots Francis studied often flew into combat, saw their buddies shot out of the sky, and there was little rhyme or reason to the madness.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, anybody’s company was life affirming and helped the pilots maintain their focus. Pilots, like Bob Morgan, the pilot of the *Memphis Belle*, recalled with fondness the relaxation and relief felt when going to dances while in training.¹⁷⁹ Thus, dances, regardless of their proximity to a combat zone, were imperative to maintaining the morale of the pilots and trainees.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

¹⁷⁸ Francis, *The Flyer*, 66.

¹⁷⁹ Robert Morgan and Ron Powers, *The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle: Memoir of a WWII Bomber Pilot* (New York: Dutton, 2001), 75.

Morale was especially crucial to the Dutch at Jackson. Unlike training at an infantry or maritime school, every time a pilot went up to train, he was defying gravity, soaring to heights of up to 30,000 feet. If something were to go wrong there was very little the pilot could do. Accidents, due to untrained aviators, occur at training bases and serve as a constant reminder of the dangers of flying, much less flying in combat. Compounding the harsh realities of the pilots' training was the fact that the training was happening on foreign soil. Hearing the administrative staff speaking English every day surely reminded them of where they were and how they got there. Dances were one of the key ways Jackson helped the Dutch relax and consider Jackson Army Air Base a second home.

Not long after the Dutch came to Jackson, the city hosted a welcoming dance for the Dutch through the USO.¹⁸⁰ The Dutch reveled in the opportunity to meet girls their age. They took the long trek from Australia aboard the USS Mariposa, landed in San Francisco, and endured a multi-day journey through American West.¹⁸¹ Although many of the participants do not talk in much detail about what happened at the dances, all of the people interviewed by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) agreed that the dances were by far the most fun way to meet people, and they were a sure fire way to meet a Dutch pilot. One of Lucille Gainey's girlfriends informed her that one of the base's American commanders wanted them to make the Dutch feel welcome, so they did not have the "feeling they had just been thrown away."¹⁸² The degree to which

¹⁸⁰ Baker, "Long Trek from War Area Ended at Jackson Army Air Base."

¹⁸¹ Rudolf Idzerda, Interview with Rudolf Idzerda, July 26, 2012, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

¹⁸² Gainey, Gainey Interview.

the local girls alleviated the “thrown away” feeling varied; however, the dances were a critical mixing bowl that broke the ice and allowed the interactions to happen.

Another way the Dutch connected intimately with the people of Jackson was through dating and even marrying, American girls. Marriage and dating were some of the trickiest situations soldiers of all nationalities and branches of service endeavored. To some, like Bud Anderson, seriously dating, much less getting engaged and married, was an unthinkable process. Many young pilots found it easy to view themselves as bullet proof, and acted like they would survive the war without issue; however, Bud understood the reality of war and did not want his sweetheart to feel obligated to him if the worst happened.¹⁸³ While some see this as a noble sentiment, many did not share Bud’s thoughts regarding dating.

In fact, the Dutch, on the whole showed almost no reservations when it came to dating. Their courage possibly stemmed from the fact that many of the Dutch saw the realities of war prior to moving to Jackson. They may have felt that life was far too short to waste without the companionship of a significant other. The more likely explanation, though, is that the Dutchmen were young, and there were plenty of girls in town. The incredibly proper behavior the Dutchmen exhibited on dates took many of the Jackson girls by surprise. Both Lucille Gainey and Marjorie Helfrich noted that the Dutch displayed many of the characteristics of a stereotypical Southern gentleman.¹⁸⁴ Lucille Gainey described a typical date which generally involved doing what the girls wanted to do that night. Sometimes they would go to the movies; however, she often preferred to

¹⁸³ Clarence Anderson and Joseph Hamelin, *To Fly and Fight: Memoirs of a Triple Ace* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 140.

¹⁸⁴ Gainey, Gainey Interview; Helfrich, Helfrich Interview.

just walk down Capitol Street and talk to her date.¹⁸⁵ Gainey noted that they would often stay out late on dates. However, she was quick to point out that nothing intimate ever occurred, and the Dutchmen were exceedingly polite: holding doors, respecting ladies, and understanding the boundaries of a typical date. As Gainey recalled, none of the girls had issues with aggressive Dutchmen when they went on dates.

Marjorie Helfrich shared a similar experience when dating Dutchmen. Marjorie, who worked on base, started dating one of the Dutch pilot trainees, Gerry von Schieeven. After dating for several months, Gerry was part of a fatal wreck that claimed his and his instructor pilot's lives. The Dutchmen who knew Gerry well, immediately formed a tight knit support circle for her, checking in with her, and making sure that nobody disturbed her while she grieved.¹⁸⁶ Dating within the Dutch ranks, brought women into a community where they not only supported the exiled Dutch, but the Dutch people supported them as well. While dating inevitably creates links between people, the Dutch pilots went above and beyond normal dating expectations. Their acts of support and community, as seen with Marjorie, ensured the Dutch would leave behind a legacy and connection with Jackson that would last for generations.

Dating a Dutchman was not always a proper affair like Marjorie and Lucille experienced. After a particularly exciting dance, Rudolf Idzerda and his girlfriend at the time, Mary Love, decided to throw caution to the wind, ignored several general orders from the commanders of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School, and eloped. Admittedly hazy on the exact details of what happened that night, a few things are certain. After successfully eloping, Rudolf and Mary ended up spending the majority of

¹⁸⁵ Gainey, Gainey Interview.

¹⁸⁶ Helfrich, Helfrich Interview.

the night in prison, after which Rudolf received a severe punishment from the commanders at the school. Needless to say under such circumstances, the union ended quickly.¹⁸⁷ Even though marital bliss did not last long, such encounters usually boosted the morale of the individuals involved. Bob Morgan, the American pilot of the *Memphis Belle*, was married twice and engaged three times over the course of the war.¹⁸⁸ Even though the relationships never worked out, to Morgan they were morale boosters nonetheless. Therefore, even though all the relationships were not traditional or ended in a conventional manner, dating boosted the morale of all involved, making the experience one Jacksonians would not soon forget.

The Dutch also enjoyed going to the movies both during dates and when relaxing with their classmates. Several pilots remembered seeing movies like Howard Hughes' *Hell's Angels* and cited that as the reason they wanted to be pilots.¹⁸⁹ During the war though, many of the Dutch pilots remembered going to the movies as a way to escape some of the pressures of pilot training. It is important to remember that from 1942-1944, Jackson was not a large town, so the movie theater may not seem significant. However, it was the only place to go many nights, especially in the winter months. The movies served an important role to military units throughout the United States. Similar to the Dutch supporting Marjorie when her boyfriend Gerry died, frequenting the movies allowed the girlfriends to familiarize themselves with one another. After a while, the girls began to know who the other girlfriends were, and they began to form a small, loosely connected community.¹⁹⁰ The creation of a community amongst the loved ones of aviators was not

¹⁸⁷ Idzerda, Interview with Rudolf Idzerda.

¹⁸⁸ Morgan and Powers, *The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle*, 69.

¹⁸⁹ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

¹⁹⁰ Gainey, Gainey Interview.

an uncommon phenomenon. There was a motto for the men training in the Tampa, Florida area: “One a day in Tampa Bay.” The girlfriends and wives of the pilots training at Tampa Bay used the movies as a support group because it helped ease the nerves of the women who had significant others flying.¹⁹¹

There is no evidence that the support group for the girlfriends in Jackson was this robust, but that does not mean that gatherings at places like the movies did not help in the long run. In an ironic twist of fate, Marjorie fell in love with Gerry’s best friend, Jan Helfrich, and the two were engaged before he went to serve in Europe. When the war was over, Marjorie went to Europe to marry Jan. The only issue was that she did not speak Dutch, and she could not stay with Jan’s family for a long time as she and Jan moved to a military base on the other side of the country. While at the base, Marjorie recognized several girls from the Jackson area from the time they spent at the movies and restaurants, and they formed a support group to help each other get used to life in the new country.¹⁹² For the women who had significant others stationed in the Pacific, the transition was not as difficult, but they still quickly formed support groups as they recognized each other from various gatherings and events.¹⁹³ Thus, going to the movies and other venues, like restaurants and soda shops in Jackson, ultimately helped create a support system for the girlfriends of the Dutchmen. The connections helped bring not only the girlfriends, but the city of Jackson, closer to the Dutch.

¹⁹¹ René Armstrong, *Wings and a Ring: Letters of War and Love from a WWII Pilot* (Mustang: Tate Publishing & Enterprises, 2011).

¹⁹² Helfrich, Helfrich Interview.

¹⁹³ Leonie Phefferkorn, Interview with Leonie Phefferkorn, n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The Dutch interacted with the Jacksonians in more ways than just by dating the single girls in town. One of the most intriguing connections the Dutch made with Jackson was through food. The Dutch in Jackson came from two different culinary cultures, the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, and entered a third region, Jackson, that prided itself on cuisine. In a travel guide, the author informs the reader that breakfasts in the Netherlands are the largest in continental Europe, and that one should pace themselves, as eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner with the Dutch would be taxing in and of itself.¹⁹⁴ Part of the reason the Dutch had large breakfasts was due to their close trade connection with the Scots. The Scots gave the Netherlands the majority of their wool for the textile industry.¹⁹⁵ As the two peoples maintained high levels of trade, the Dutch adopted several aspects of Scottish culture, chief among these was their breakfast size.

The men of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School also spent significant amounts of time in the Pacific, and because of the Nazi invasion of Western Europe, trade with European nations slowed dramatically. Therefore, the Dutch adopted a far more Asian style cuisine. In order to accommodate the more Asian style cuisine, the administrators at Jackson Army Air Base ordered large quantities of rice in order to provide a similar cuisine for the Dutch.¹⁹⁶ The unique palates of the Dutch training at Jackson meant that they were open to trying new foods, and as a result, the Dutch went out to eat as much as possible. On weekends when there were not dances, large groups of Dutchmen would go into Jackson to try the unique Southern food. One of the favorite

¹⁹⁴ Frank Schoonmaker, *Come With Me Through Belgium and Holland* (New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1928), 108.

¹⁹⁵ Charles Wilson, *The Dutch Republic and the Civilisation of the 17th Century* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 178.

¹⁹⁶ "History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1941-June 1942" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 143, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

spots for the Dutch was The Rotisserie, which could easily accommodate the Dutch airmen and their dates.¹⁹⁷ In fact, the Dutch became enamored with American cuisine, so much so that one journalist noted, “Blasted out of the Pacific war, the men of the Royal Dutch Air Force miraculously escaped annihilation, are now based in Mississippi, where they marvel at our girls, language, chocolate marshmallow sundaes.”¹⁹⁸ The Dutch passion for food and their culinary curiosity enabled them to connect with the locals in a way that could transcend even the staunchest language barriers.

Beyond the everyday activities, there were other, uniquely Dutch ways, the members of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School connected with the people of Jackson. One of the lesser known ways was through sports. Beyond participating in sports on base as part of a regimented physical training program, the Dutch took part in sporting exhibitions in Jackson and around the country. In November of 1942, a soccer team composed of Dutchmen from Jackson Army Air Base traveled to St. Louis to play the municipal league champions, as the St. Louis league was one of the better leagues in the country.¹⁹⁹ Although the Dutch lost 5-2, the league invited them back in May 1943 to play the runners-up, the El Rays, and they lost that game by a score of 3-2 in front of a crowd of 6,000 people. Later that summer, the Dutch invited the El Rays to play a game in Jackson, so the Dutch could have home field advantage. Thus, in July 1943, the Millsaps College Athletic Stadium hosted the first international soccer game in the

¹⁹⁷ Helfrich, Helfrich Interview.

¹⁹⁸ Hermann Deutsch, “The Flying Dutchmen of Dixie,” *Saturday Evening Post*, January 23, 1943, 10, The Mississippi Armed Forces Museum.

¹⁹⁹ “History of the Physical Training Department Jackson Army Air Base” (U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), 45, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

South.²⁰⁰ The Dutch won the match 2-1 and ended their series with the St. Louis league with a win.

In August 1943, the Dutch hosted two athletic competitions with the goal of raising money for the Red Cross of Jackson and giving back to the community. The first event was a soccer match against students from Louisiana State University. The LSU team consisted mostly of students from a multitude of Central American nations. The Dutch intended for the event to raise awareness of the international communities present in the South and highlight the importance of international organizations like the Red Cross. At the match, the people of Jackson showed up in droves to support their local team. The game was a huge success, as many of the people in attendance donated, as well as the fact that the Dutch won their match with a comfortable 16-2 score. The success of this event convinced the Dutch to put on a field hockey sports clinic for the people of Jackson as well. The Dutch spent the day teaching the people of Jackson the rules and fundamentals of a sport many had never encountered before. At the end of the clinic, the Dutch split into an Army and a Navy squad and played a grudge match for the locals. The two events together raised over \$700 for the Red Cross, a fairly large donation for people in a nation at war.²⁰¹

General Douglas MacArthur said, “On the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days and other fields will bear the fruits of victory.”²⁰² Although MacArthur is undoubtedly referring to the competitive spirit and teamwork that are necessary for soldiers to be successful in combat, it also applies to Jackson. On the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 46.

²⁰¹ “History of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1943,” 49.

²⁰² *Contrails: The Air Force Cadet Handbook* (Colorado Springs: U.S. Air Force Academy, 2013).

playing fields of Jackson, the Dutch made a connection with the locals that tightened personal connections, raised morale, and raised money for organizations like the Red Cross and the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina Fund. While these actions may not have created instantaneous impacts on the battlefield, they contributed to the success of the Dutch, who helped the Allies secure victory over both the Nazis in Europe and the Japanese Pacific.

To Americans, royalty tends to be a fanciful concept seen in cartoons, or read about in books, but never experienced first-hand. Another uniquely Dutch experience for the people of Jackson while the Royal Netherlands Military Flight School was there, was multiple visits from Dutch royalty. Prince Bernhard played an active role with the operations of the training program, as he was the supreme commander of the Dutch Air Force. Although he lived with his family in Canada, he played an active role in recruiting new pilot trainees and raising awareness of the school.²⁰³ Therefore, he came to visit the school and inspect the ranks on several occasions. Many local civic leaders did not expect to have royalty visit Jackson, so each of his visits received a big response from the community. On his first visit, which Prince Bernhard attempted to keep strictly for military matters, the people of Jackson made him the guest of honor at a dinner that the Mississippi governor, the mayor of Jackson, and other local officials attended.²⁰⁴ Ultimately, the visit was exceedingly short, as the prince was immediately satisfied with the facilities, organization, and progress the school had made in the first two months at Jackson. The prince's visit was not a spectacular event as he was more interested with the

²⁰³ Jacob Veenstra and Jo Veenstra, Interview about Jan Veenstra, n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

²⁰⁴ "Prince Reviews Netherlands Air Forces at Base," *Jackson Daily News*, July 24, 1942.

state of his military than with public relations. However, the event did whet the local officials' appetite to impress more royalty with their community, and they got their opportunity when Princess Julianna came to Jackson.

By 1943, when Princess Julianna came to visit, she was the highest ranking member of the royal family outside of Europe. Her mother, Queen Wilhelmina, stayed in London to coordinate the Dutch war effort with the Allies, and as a sign of solidarity with her subjects still under Nazi occupation as she regularly gave speeches via "Radio Orange."²⁰⁵ Therefore, when the princess came to visit Jackson, the whole community put forward its best face and reveled in the rare opportunity to meet royalty. Princess Julianna's visit to Jackson was one of the most anticipated events of the 1940s. The princess was to stay at the residence of the Dutch commanders located at 942 Bellevue Place, a residence maintained by Jackson native "Tanta Jane."²⁰⁶ To impress the princess, the community helped make the residence the embodiment of Southern hospitality. Professionals manicured the lawn and ensured it was a rich green, the common rooms were so clean they would have passed the strictest military inspection, and the staff decorated the bedroom with pastel colors, and made it as comfortable as possible. Even with all of the preparation, "Tanta Jane" still felt as though she had so much left to do, and that her residence would never be worthy of hosting royalty.²⁰⁷ The over the top efforts by the locals displayed a clear respect for the princess and a respect for the Dutch training in the town. Although Jacksonians did not spend weeks preparing every

²⁰⁵ Besamusca and Verheul, *Discovering the Dutch*, 20.

²⁰⁶ Bette Barber, "'Tanta Jane' Is Ready to Receive Royalty at Dutch Headquarters," *Jackson Daily News*, n.d.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

establishment ordinary Dutchmen patronized, they took pride in treating them well and making them feel at home.

Unlike her husband, Princess Julianna engaged in a far more robust public relations campaign. In fact, during her reign as queen, which began almost immediately after World War Two, her people often commented on her accessibility and her marvelous rapport with the common Dutch.²⁰⁸ Throughout her trip, the princess displayed her unmatched ability to connect with everyone. She maintained a schedule packed with military reviews, social events with local leaders, and several speeches to give in just under forty-eight hours.²⁰⁹ However, Princess Julianna displayed her true character when a group of elementary school children threw flowers in front of her car. She was so moved by the event that she ordered her car to stop and took the time to meet every child in attendance.²¹⁰ That single act of kindness spoke volumes for the character of the Dutch people and endeared the nation's leadership to the people of Jackson. Not only was her impact positive for Jacksonian-Dutch relations at the time, but also it endeared the Dutch to the next generation of Mississippians.

Beyond taking the time to talk to everyone, even the children, Princess Julianna's trip was a symbolic act of solidarity between the Dutch royal family, the Dutch military, and the people of Jackson. The royal family was not in dire straits financially, and Princess Julianna certainly could afford nice clothes. On her trip to Jackson, she wore simple dresses with neutral colors, and, aside from the small escort she travelled with, it

²⁰⁸ Besamusca and Verheul, *Discovering the Dutch*, 21.

²⁰⁹ "As Princess Reviewed Troops, Guests At Air Base," *Jackson Daily News*, n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

²¹⁰ Jack Hancock, "Dutch Princess Voices New Unity For United Nations Victory Drive; Winds Up Colorful Visit To City," n.d.

was nearly impossible to distinguish the princess from many other women in Jackson.²¹¹ By not prominently displaying her rank to those around her, along with her acts of kindness to both the Dutch and Americans, the princess was able to emphasize the importance of unity and the role even the smallest nations played in the global conflict. Therefore, when Princess Julianna spoke of a brotherhood that had blossomed and would form the basis of a new world order in the ensuing years, the people listened and looked forward with hope to continuing relations with the Netherlands.

The Dutch also interacted with the public in less extravagant ways than visits from royalty. A headline in Jackson read, “Saint Nicholaas komit in Jackson per vliegtuig ann!”²¹² Indeed, Saint Nick came to visit the Dutch children on time, even in the middle of a war, and he came in the most dramatic fashion, via airplane. Christmas is a major holiday for several reasons to the Dutch. Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of the city of Amsterdam, and his importance to the Netherlands had survived several hostile takeovers from foreign governments, anti-Santa Claus crusades from new religions, and was continuing to bring joy to the Dutch in exile in the United States.²¹³ For Christmas 1942, the Dutch shared their unique holiday traditions with the US. The most notable differences between the American Santa Claus and the Dutch version are that the Dutch Saint Nicholas’ Eve is on the fifth of December, their Santa does not use flying reindeer, and the Dutch do not leave goodies for Santa himself. As tradition goes, every year Santa Claus arrived in Amsterdam on a boat from Spain. Anticipating his arrival, the children

²¹¹ “As Princess Reviewed Troops, Guests At Air Base.”

²¹² Bette Barber, “St. Nicholas Rode White Horse in Jackson to Start a Dutch-Inspired Legend,” *Jackson Daily News*, April 26, 1953.

²¹³ Barnouw, *The Dutch*, 122.

left hay in their wooden shoes for the horse Santa rode the countryside on, and if they were good little children, Santa replaced the hay with a present.

As the war presented some extreme circumstances, the Dutch modified some of the traditions a little for the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School. Due to the intercontinental nature of Santa's visit, he flew into Jackson, rode his horse through the streets, and met the children at an auditorium on Jackson Army Air Base.²¹⁴ There Santa and his helper, *Swarte Piet*, delivered toys to all the good children at the base. They even had a gift for the base commander, Colonel Thad Foster.²¹⁵ By parading their uniquely dressed Santa Claus through the streets of Jackson, the Dutch had the opportunity to talk about their culture and connect with the people of Jackson in a way that daily operation on a military base would not have allowed. Along with that, the assistance the community gave the Dutch, helping them pull off such an important holiday for the children who had experienced immense hardship before arriving in Jackson, truly brought the two communities closer together.

Unfortunately, not all of the interactions between the two cultures were positive, as neither group was morally impeccable. The most unique exchange the Dutch had in this regard concerned the complex racial relations of the American South. Wilbur J. Cash described race relations in the South during the 1930s and 1940s as driven by a proto-Dorian bond.²¹⁶ Cash meant that there was a segregation based on skin color, and a solidarity amongst whites that no matter what one's economic condition was, they were a part of the white community, making them better than any black person. The racism of

²¹⁴ Barber, "St. Nicholas Rode White Horse in Jackson to Start a Dutch-Inspired Legend."

²¹⁵ "Jackson Army Airbase Yearbook 1942" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942), Air Force Historical Research Agency.

²¹⁶ Wilbur Cash, *The Mind of the South*, Vintage Books Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 66.

the South manifested itself in Jim Crow laws, which restricted the rights of blacks to vote and legalized separation along racial lines in public areas like schools, busses, and trains.²¹⁷ In a time when individuals and communities took drastic measures to keep people segregated, the experience at Jackson Army Air Base stands in stark contrast to the rest of the region. First, the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School did not just train Holland-Dutch, they trained Dutch East Indies-Dutch, too. Due to the Asian descent of the trainees, it is remarkable that there was not a single instance where anyone from Jackson acted with malice against them. In fact, Lucille Gainey dated one of the men who was from the Dutch East Indies and noted that even though he never proposed, her parents would have said yes had he asked for permission to marry.²¹⁸

Given the South's historical record with race relations, such a wholesale acceptance of the pilot trainees of Asian descent is remarkable. Not only does this trend contradict what one would expect to see in the South but also, due to the stigma associated with Asians at the time, it contradicts national trends. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States adopted a program of rounding up Americans of Japanese descent and placing them in internment camps.²¹⁹ Again, the South seemed to make an exception to typical race relations to accommodate their allies. However, their acceptance of their Asian allies was not the only racial boundary tested in Jackson.

Most Americans are aware of the Tuskegee Airmen and the invaluable contributions they made to both the war effort and to breaking down the color barrier in

²¹⁷ Edward Ayers, *Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877-1906* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 98.

²¹⁸ Gainey, Gainey Interview.

²¹⁹ Peter Calvocoressi, Guy Wint, and John Pritchard, *The Penguin History of the Second World War*, Reprint Edition (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 967.

the military. The “Red Tails” as they are known, trained with exclusively black pilot trainees and mechanic units.²²⁰ Therefore, while they faced significant barriers integrating into combat situations, their isolated location saved them from many racial hardships while they were training. At Jackson Army Air Base, the 6th Training Squadron was an all-black squadron that helped maintain the training aircraft flown at the base.²²¹ These men worked around the clock to ensure the Dutch had planes that were ready to fly, as the tempo of the training at the base was higher than a typical training base. On the last day the Dutch were in Jackson Colonel Conrad Giebel gave a speech to the American forces at Jackson, and took time to thank the maintenance squadrons in particular for their unparalleled excellence at meeting their rigorous training demands.²²² Moments like these challenged the norms of racial relations in the South. Not only did a black unit perform the job well in a joint environment, but it also never had a plane fail due to poor maintenance.²²³ Such a symbiotic relationship clearly challenged traditional racial stereotypes, but unfortunately, the profitable partnership did not extend beyond the base’s front gate.

One of the reasons racial tensions did not flare up at the base may have to do with the time period. Sonya Rose argues that in Britain racial tensions between Britons and the people from their colonies existed throughout the war. However, both groups often set aside their issues to face the larger crisis in Europe.²²⁴ This does not mean that racial violence did not occur among soldiers. The British promoted a sense of “we-ness” that

²²⁰ Charles W. Dryden, *A-Train: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman* (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 1997), 44.

²²¹ “History of Jackson Army Airbase February 1941-June 1942,” 107.

²²² Conrad Giebel, “Colonel Conrad Giebel Farewell Speech,” n.d., Air Force Historical Research Agency.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8.

emphasized putting differences aside in favor of focusing on a common enemy.²²⁵ It is likely that the people of Jackson felt a similar focus on the larger crisis and allowed their racial sentiments to occupy a secondary position to the war effort. Likewise, there was a relatively small contingent of American forces at Jackson Army Air Base. The lack of an American presence reduced the likelihood that deep-seated American racial issues would seep into the base; however, it also ensured that the beneficial qualities of racial cooperation remained within the confines of the base.

Based on the persistence of racially biased laws and the slow change in military policies regarding racial integration, the fruitful, multi-racial experience at Jackson Army Air Base appears to be an anomaly in the South's history. The people of Jackson did not adopt the cooperative spirit seen between the racially diverse units at the base. Even though the public experienced the benefits of multi-racial endeavors, some traditions were too ingrained to be changed.

While the interactions between the Dutch and the people of Jackson brought them closer together, what tied the two communities together forever was the shared sacrifices of the communities and a commitment never to forget how they worked together to help win World War Two. Through various training mishaps and accidents, forty Dutchmen died while training at Jackson.²²⁶ How nations remember their dead combatants has been the focus of a many studies in the past. Often, there is a struggle between how the people who fought the war want their comrades remembered and how the politicians want the dead remembered. John Bodnar identified two different dialogues that one can see at many national cemeteries and war memorials: political and vernacular. The political

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Kay Pittman, "40 Flying Dutchmen Trained, Died Here," *State Times*, September 6, 1959.

dialogue constitutes the message a nation is trying to convey about a war and those who died for later generations.²²⁷ The messages most often associated with political dialogue emphasize the state over the individual and assign a moral message to the conflict. A prime example of this is the Vietnam War Memorial. The original design had no mention of the United States and had no statues that glorified the combatants. Before Congress approved the memorial, the memorial had to include a flag, a heroic statue of American troops, and add the phrase “God Bless America.”²²⁸ These additions served to remind the monument’s visitors of the righteous nature of the American cause, and why those young men died in a small Asian country.

The other language embodied at war memorials is the vernacular. The vernacular dialogue emphasizes the individuals who lost their lives and seeks to remember their lives as opposed to glorifying the war or furthering political aims.²²⁹ Using the Vietnam War Memorial as an example again, the vernacular language is evident in the long black wall containing the names of every American who fell in combat. On the wall there are no ranks, no branch of service, no age, and no distinctions based on skin color. The wall does not attempt to make a statement about the war, America’s war aims, or the morality of the conflict, it merely represents the people who died and emphasizes their sacrifice. A purely vernacular memorial offers a place where soldiers can visit and remember their friends who died. It often serves as a place of catharsis for veterans.

²²⁷ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

²²⁸ G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2004), 2.

²²⁹ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 7.

Within the first few months of the Dutch arrival in Jackson, several Dutchmen died in training accidents. The deaths posed a challenge for the Dutch as they could not ship the bodies back to the Netherlands, and they could not keep them in the open, either. Therefore, on March 17, 1943, the City of Jackson passed a resolution that gave the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School lots 47 thru 51 at Cedarlawn Cemetery to bury their dead. The resolution also declared the soil where the Dutch buried their dead was to be Dutch soil, so the airmen who gave their lives could rest in Dutch lands.²³⁰ By honoring the dead of another country and treating their soldiers with respect, the city of Jackson bound itself to the Netherlands forever, creating a bond that has not been broken.

As these plots constituted Dutch soil, the leadership at the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School decided to erect a monument to commemorate their fallen comrades. Jan Staal had always been a gifted artist, and as such, created the monument that would commemorate his fallen comrades.²³¹ Jan designed an obelisk, roughly ten feet tall that bore the names of the men who died while training at Jackson. The only way someone could tell this was a Dutch memorial is by the small lion engraved near the top of the monument, and the Dutch phrase between the lion and the names, which translates to “Here lies our honored dead.”²³² For someone with no official training by an arts school, Jan Staal created a powerful memorial to those who died during training. The bulk of the monument is composed of a vernacular style message as it has only the names of the men who died. The emphasis on the people serves to accentuate the individual

²³⁰ Walter Scott, “Cedarlawn Cemetery Dedication,” March 17, 1943, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

²³¹ Mary Staal, Interview with Mary Staal, n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

²³² Jamaine Dickens, “Dutch Pilots Honor Countrymen Killed in Hawkins Field Training,” *Clarion-Ledger*, September 28, 1993.

efforts and sacrifice of each man. Prominently displaying the names of the fallen ensures that men's individual efforts to liberate their occupied homeland are not lost on future generations. Although the lion represents the Netherlands, the subtle political message serves to remind people that the men who died at Jackson were not from the United States and died fighting for a country under foreign occupation. The masterful blending of both political and vernacular language makes the monument as powerful now as it was in 1943.²³³

The sacrifices the "Flying Dutchmen" made while training at Jackson helped create a bond between the Netherlands and the city that remains to this day. Although the cemetery's groundskeepers maintain the grounds, for several years after the Dutch departure there were no official ceremonies to remember the joint training mission or the many sacrifices made for the Netherlands.²³⁴ In the 1950s, the Americans and the Dutch began to hold ceremonies on Memorial Day to remember what happened at Jackson.²³⁵ The upkeep of the grounds and the ceremonies started by the city have figure prominently in several reunions the Dutch pilots have held in Jackson. Sandy McNeal's father, Colonel Wallace Sanders, has helped to keep the ceremonies special even into the Twenty-first Century. Because Jackson did such a good job maintaining the Dutch cemetery, Herman Arens requested that his family bury him with his comrades in Jackson. Colonel Sanders worked countless hours to ensure that all of the political hurdles were cleared and eventually secured permission for the Arens family to lay their

²³³ Staal, Interview with Mary Staal.

²³⁴ Sandy McNeal, Interview with Sandy McNeal, n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

²³⁵ "Netherlands Officials Pay Tribute To Jackson Citizens In Memorial Day Service," *Jackson Daily News*, May 5, 1954.

father to rest at Cedarlawn.²³⁶ Had there not been a lasting connection between the Dutch and the city of Jackson, it is likely that Herman's last request would not have been fulfilled. The efforts made by multiple people, most of all Colonel Sanders, highlights the lasting bond formed between the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School and the people of Jackson.

World War Two gave people from many different nations the opportunity to interact with each other. For the most part, these international exchanges were in a military atmosphere. The interactions between the Dutch and Jacksonians from May 1942 thru February 1944, represent one of the unique times where a strictly military setting did not dictate all of the interactions between international communities. As a result, the people of Jackson formed a bond with the Dutch that persists to this day. What made this bond so strong were the existing similarities between the people of Jackson and the Dutch. Both groups saw themselves as democratic, fiscally conservative, yet adventurous people. The Dutch and locals strengthened their connection through their largely positive interactions. The Dutch endeared themselves to Jackson through respectful dating practices, common interests in how to spend free time, and hosting events that raised money for charities such as the Red Cross and the Queen Wilhelmina Fund. These communities made their connection permanent through the dignity and honor the city showed for all Dutchmen: the trainees, the royalty, and the deceased. By emphasizing the sacrifices made by individuals and continuing to make the Dutch an honored aspect of the community, the two groups have remained closely linked. The interactions between the

²³⁶ McNeal, Interview with Sandy McNeal.

Dutch and Jackson's population show how even in the Netherlands' darkest hour, the Dutch could find a new family and rise from the ashes stronger than ever.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After February 1944, Jackson Army Air Base only trained three classes of American pilots before shutting down training operations in June.²³⁷ When the Dutch left Jackson to take the war to their enemies, the war left Jackson with them. No major training operations resumed after the Dutch left, and the bomber units that left Jackson did not continue peacetime operations in Jackson. Beyond the native Jacksonians who served in the American military during the war, training the Dutch pilots at Jackson Army Air Base was the biggest contribution the people of Jackson made to the war. The courageous service of the Dutch airmen not only made their countrymen proud; they also made the people of Jackson proud.

Terms like legacy and success are open to a wide variety of interpretation. For instance, when running a marathon, most individuals have different definitions of success. To some, a successful marathon may mean finishing the race, while others may only consider the race successful if they win or hit a goal time. The same concept holds true when looking back at the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School. Men like Otto Ward defined the success of the mission by the number of planes the Dutch ultimately brought to the fight and the amount of ordinance the Dutch dropped on their enemies.²³⁸ As the school's primary function was to train pilots that would ultimately contribute to the Allied cause and reclaim Dutch land, Ward's definition represents a valid viewpoint. The Dutch had the option to quit and let their resource rich and numerically superior

²³⁷ "History of Jackson Army Air Base February 1944 - June 1944" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 2, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

²³⁸ Ward, "Life and Work in the 18 Squadron NEI."

allies reconquer Europe and the Pacific. Although limited by their size by the end of the war, the Dutch military was able to contribute to the removal of both the Nazis and the Japanese from their territories.

Some like Rudolf Idzerda would argue that the school and the Dutch contributions to the war were insignificant. Idzerda feels that, due to the small size of the Dutch force, its legacy when considering the entirety of World War II was negligible.²³⁹ The Dutch certainly did not have a large force to confront their enemies, and different nations often used the Dutch as supplementary units within larger campaigns. The Dutch did not possess the bomb, they did not single handedly burn towns to the ground, and their presence alone did not shift the tide of the Allied air campaigns. Thus, when judging the success of the school and its legacy from a battlefield perspective, it can be easy to understate the importance of the Dutch training program in Jackson.

The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School's success and legacy extended beyond the battlefield, though. In the eyes of men like Willem Roozeboom, the flight school was important because it offered the Dutch people hope. The school also highlighted the importance of cooperation and offered a template for future international training exercises.²⁴⁰ World War II could not have been won without the coordination and cooperation of the Allied nations. The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School was on the vanguard of a wave of multi-national training centers and exercises that offer increased security for all nations involved.

One of the primary examples of multi-national cooperation in the aviation community is the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training (ENJJPT) program. Through

²³⁹ Idzerda, Interview with Rudolf Idzerda.

²⁴⁰ Roozeboom, Roozeboom Interview.

ENJJPT pilots from countries allied to the United States, including the Netherlands, send their most promising pilot trainees to Shepherd Air Force Base to train together. Much like in Jackson, the cultural exchange between the member nations is immense. For instance, on April 26, 2014, the Dutch pilot trainees introduced all of their fellow students to the Dutch celebration of the *Koningsdag*, the King's Day in the Netherlands.²⁴¹ The uniquely Dutch celebration allowed officers from multiple nations to learn about Dutch culture and customs. Many of the cultural interactions begun at Jackson Army Air Base during World War II are included in training programs like ENJJPT today.

Beyond pilot training, international cooperation is evident in combat readiness exercises like Red Flag held at Nellis Air Force Base. The purpose of Red Flag is to give pilots realistic combat training missions to prepare for war.²⁴² As the program has grown, more nations have joined the United States to give their pilots a realistic taste of combat training. The pilots of the nations that participate in this multi-national exercise experience improvements in their flying skills as well as their understandings of other nations. While training the Dutch at Jackson did not directly create the multi-national Red Flag exercise, their experience helped prove such diverse training environments were not only possible but also beneficial. Thus, the legacy of the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School extends far beyond the battlefield. The success of the training program in Jackson proudly displayed the benefits of a joint training environment for both the military and the local community.

²⁴¹ Kyle Rasmussen, Facebook post to the author, April 26, 2014.

²⁴² James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers: How the Generation of Officers Born of Vietnam Revolutionized the American Style of War* (Potomac Books Inc., 1997), 367.

The Dutch came to Jackson Army Air Base out of necessity. The need to maintain the fight against their enemies drove them to the only place with the resources necessary to continue the Dutch pilot training program, the United States. Before they had time to settle in at Jackson Army Air Base, the Dutch began training pilots who would go to both Europe and Australia to fight.

The Dutch did not isolate themselves while they were at Jackson. Instead, through interactions with the US Army Air Forces, the Dutch made changes to their military culture that made it a more efficient fighting force in the immediate future. The Dutch adopted a more accountable and structured flying style that enabled them to fly in conjunction with Allied forces later in the war. The Dutch ultimately adopted large parts of the more scientific American approach to pilot training as it was more efficient than the previous Dutch training system. The Dutch did not adopt the American military culture wholesale, though, particularly when the American traditions did not help the Dutch war effort.

There was also a significant cultural exchange between the Dutch and the civilian population of Jackson. The two different groups shared many common traits, which helped facilitate interactions between the groups. Sports, cuisine, visits from royalty, and dances were all ways the Dutch interacted with the locals and shared their culture. Ultimately, the Dutch and the local girls of Jackson began to date, and several young American ladies married their Dutchmen. The Dutch and Jacksonians shared in times of triumph, but they also shared in times of grief. The respect that the Jacksonians gave to the Dutchmen killed in training accidents cemented a tight bond between the two

communities. The joint environment proved that even in the darkest times, humanity can find a way to prosper.

The impact in combat of the Dutchmen during World War II may be debatable. However, militaries today can see the impact of their legacy. The Dutch experience in Jackson helped open the doors to multi-national military cooperation in basic training and training exercises, which has benefitted the aviators in countries around the world.

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