

Hoorn

Nov. 31. 1939

Dear Jeanette,

Perhaps you think that I forgot you quite at all, but my dear friend please forgive me. I couldn't write under such circumstances as we lived here in the Netherlands. But a present I take my pen and I will write you a few letters.

I received your letter in the last of July. It was first before the International Conference for Peace in Amsterdam. You wrote me that some of your friends would join the meeting; you gave me the names of them, to when I came to Amsterdam I could visit them. Although I was in Amsterdam during the meeting it was not able for me to speak with them for I was not a member of the meeting; only a visitor, and it was not allowed to join the whole meeting.

The most thrilling of the meeting I found the Church-service in the very old church in Amsterdam. In this church were sitting side by side the delegates of the whole world. Black, white, brown, Japanese women and Roman boys; Negro-girls in their white dresses; Germans, French, English, Dutch, Chinese, Americans. It was so thrilling to see these young women and men, praying for peace.

It shoke me so much that it was in the Netherlands that this meeting was hold and that our Prince Bernhard, Godfried bon Lippe-Biesterfeld - Prince of the Netherlands was among the thousands and that it was the he who was the first man, who took The Lords Supper.

But helas, it was to beautiful, only one month later and you saw the realty. The Germans attacked a poor navy. People, who prayed for peace, who injured nobody, was killed by a people, that also didn't like a war, but whose leader is crazy.

It was on Aug. 29 that in the Netherlands the mobilization was declared and on that day I was obligated to join the army, just as my brother. It was hard for my poor elders, who saw their two children start..... . Especially my mother was very grieved.

As you perhaps know, we here in Holland have compulsory Military service. I started in the morning of Aug 29 at seven o'clock and in the evening at six o'clock I was at my destination, Hoorn, a town at the side of the (?Huyder?) Sea, in the North of Amsterdam. My brother didn't join me, he started for Doesburg, a town in the East of the country, at the side of German.

When I came in Hoorn, there were already very, very much soldiers and also very boys who lived under the same circumstances as I. We here in Holland form the Army (of the navy) when we are 19 years old, but in some cases, you can get delay, especially when you study; but that delay is not guilty in time of mobilization. And from that day I am a soldier. It is my duty to defend my country and I am happy that I am able to do to, although I hope, and I pray God day and night, that it will never come over the Netherlands. But when the war comes, we will fight for our queen and our land first as our for our fathers did; we will dye for the liberty of our country.

We must work very hard. We rise at six in the morning and we go to bet at ten o'clock in the evening. We must work very hard for we are prepared for officer.

I shall sent you some phot0s of Hoorn. Hoorn is a very old town. It is not so big. It is the birth place of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who build in (????) Batavia on the ruins of Jacatra.

I spoke here in Hoorn a Dutchman who worked before the mobilization in Germany, and who told me that he had received on Aug 30, the mobilization order; that he had seen on the German stations, the bodies of men lying in a corner on the platform. The bodies of men who refused to get in the train, to go to the front to attack a poor country. Men who had fought in 1914 against the French, men who knew what war was. Men, who died rather on the platform, than in the ?? trenches.

Dear friend, I will not write more about the war. But it is so very terrible for us. We are only a country with 9.000.000 people, and we are not equal to such men as A.H.

You asked me in your letter, or should do you favor. You liked very much to have a pair of wooden shoes. Dear, Jeannette, I should like very much to send you such a pair, but at present it is not sure that when I sent you it, you receive it. But I promise you that when the war is over (?), I will send you a pair of Dutch wooden shoes.

Dear friend, I hope you will receive this letter; and I wish you a happy Christmas, a very good New-Year.

Jeannette, I have not time enough to write more.

Receive the best wishes from your Dutch boy

H. Roelofs

PS See page 5

When you will write me back, please write to the following address:

H. Roelofs,
19e Depot - Bataljon
3e Depot - Compagnie
Hoorn (Holland)

Please write soon.

Daaaaaaaaay!

Hermmanes Roelofs
19 e Depot Bataljon
3e Depot-Compagnie
Hoorn