The Eighty Years War 1568-1648

Written by Lee Offen

In 1572 the orange-white-blue flag was first mentioned when the town of Brill (Den Briel) was liberated. The red-white-blue flag was first mentioned in 1596.

Background

As a result of wars, marriages and political maneuvering most of the region currently known as Belgium and The Netherlands were in the hands of the Dukes of Burgundy. Charles V the Holy Roman Emperor was the ruler of this region by 1515. By the mid 16th century the Hapsburg controlled Netherlands was comprised of 3 million people with 300 cities in 17 provinces, the southern three Walloon speaking and the northern 14 speaking Dutch. The representative assembly for the Netherlands was the States General ("Staten-Generaal"), first called into being by Philip the Good in 1464. Antwerp was one of the economic centers of Europe and the place from which the gold bullion coming from the New World was exchanged. The Hapsburg-Valois Wars with France ended in 1559 with the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis making the movement of people and ideas easier in Western Europe. One of the ideas on the move was Calvinist Protestantism out of Geneva. It found particular support from the numerous lower class, lesser noble and townsfolk in the Netherlands.

Timeline

Some of the events of the French Wars of Religion, 30 Years War and War of Three Kingdoms are included, as they had considerable bearing on the events occurring during the 80 Years War.

1510-1550 Antwerp becomes a center of Lutheran Protestantism

1522 The spread of Lutheran Protestantism in Netherlands leads to the establishment of an Inquisition
“To enter their houses and to examine the abundance of furniture and all kind of utensils, all equally neat and well kept, causes great pleasure and even greater astonishment, for indeed, there is not perhaps in the whole world anything like it.”

On homes in the Netherlands, Luigi Guicciardini, 1540

1540-1550 Increase in Anabaptist Protestantism in the Netherlands

1550-1560 Increase in Calvinist Protestantism in the Netherlands

1550 “Edict of Blood” establishes death penalty for Protestant heresies.

October 1555 Emperor Charles V, a Burgundian who spoke Flemish, abdicates and the Hapsburg Empire is divided, with Spain and the Netherlands passing to Charles’s son Phillip II.

The Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen; the French seem madmen, and are wise.

Charles V

1555 Phillip II appoints William of Orange, one of Charles V’s favorites as provincial governor (“Stadthouder”) of Holland, Utrecht and Zeeland. The Count of Egmont was appointed Stadthouder of Flanders and Artois.

June 1557 8,000 English soldiers land at Calais to join Hapsburg forces against France

July 1557 Joint Hapsburg-English force besiege Saint Quentin. French move to raise siege.

July 1557 French Huguenots begin attending meetings armed to prevent arrest by royal or ecclesiastical officials

10 August 1557 French relief column routed by cavalry force under command of Count Egmont

28 August 1557 Sack of Saint Quentin by Hapsburg-English force.

1558 William of Orange persuades the States-General to grant Phillip II a 9 year subsidy in exchange for the granting of liberties and removal of 3,000 Spanish mercenaries.

1559-1565 Steady increase of Calvinist influence from the German States and France in the Netherlands

June 1559 Treaty of Cateau Cambresis between France and Hapsburgs.

7 August 1559 Phillip II’s last visit to the Netherlands. Margaret of Parma appointed his Regent.

Antoine Granvelle appointed President of the Council of State.

1561 Spanish troops depart Netherlands

1562 Reorganization of Bishoprics in the Netherlands and centralization of their control. Granvelle appointed Primate of the Church of the Netherlands.
July, 1561 Royal edict authorizes imprisonment and confiscation of property upon all who attend any Huguenot public or private worship service. Beginning of new influx of refugees to Kent from Low Countries, Picardy, Artois and Flanders.

January 1562 French royal Edict of January grants limited legal recognition to Huguenots

1 March 1562 French Catholics massacre Huguenots at Vassy.

2 April 1562 Huguenots under the Duc de Conde capture Orleans and are reinforced with 7,000 German mercenaries.

April- May 1562 Huguenots occupy Tours, Blois, Anger, Beaugency, Lyon and other towns across France

April 1562 Huguenots massacred at Sens

28 May – 26 October 1562 Huguenot town of Rouen is besieged by Catholic forces. Garrison of townspeople reinforced by 200 Scots and 300 English mercenaries. Garrison wiped out and the city is sacked for three days as payment to French Catholic soldiers and mercenaries.

27-30 July 1562 English garrison of La Harve besieged by French Catholics, surrender and depart for England.

May-November 1562 Huguenot towns besieged by Catholic forces under Duc De Guise

July 1562 Huguenots massacred at Tours

19 Dec 1562 French Catholic victory at Dreux. Constable Montmorency captured by Huguenots and Duc De Conde captured by Catholic forces. Total forces engaged estimated to be 30,000 with casualties estimated to be 10,000.

March 1563 Peace Edict of Amboise allows freedom of conscience and legal Huguenot worship outside of specified French towns.

October 1563 Elizabeth I provides money and troops to Huguenots in exchange for the occupation of LaHavre and Dieppe. Pope Pius IV provides Duc De Guise with 2,500 mercenaries. Phillip II provides troops for use in province of Guyenne on the Spanish border.

March 1564 Peace treaty between Charles IX and Elizabeth I.

November 1565 Resignation of William of Orange, Count of Horn, Lamoral of Egmont from the Council of State over persecution of Protestants and loss of influence over selection of Bishops.

Spring 1566- Spring 1567 The Year of Miracles (Annus Mirabilis) in the Netherlands

5 April 1566 Louis of Nassau and Count Brederode, with 400 of their fellow nobles presented the Compromise of Breda to Margaret of Parma requesting suspension of the Edict of Blood and Inquisition.

18-30 April 1566 Iconoclast Fury (beeldenstorm) results in the defacing of Catholic Churches throughout the Netherlands

June 1566 Synod of Antwerp leads to mass gatherings of Calvinists in Flanders, Brabant, Zeeland, Valenciennes and Holland by armed participants.
August 1566-January 1567 Iconoclast fury in southern Flanders leads to Calvinist control of the cities of Tournai and Valenciennes. Both cities are besieged by Egmont, surrender, and the ringleaders are executed.

23 August 1566 Margaret of Parma agrees to the Compromise of Breda and allows Protestant worship in all places where it is already taking place.

2 September 1566 William of Orange negotiates agreement allowing for Protestant churches inside cities.

13 March 1567 Battle of Oosterweel. Calvinist rebel “Beggar” army (geuzen leger) defeated.

March-August 1567 Duke of Alba’s army moves up “Spanish Road” from Italy to Brussels. Charles IX raises army of 6,000 but does not disband it after Alba arrives in Brussels.

22 August 1567 Duke of Alba arrives in Brussels with an army of 9,000 to quell unrest in preparation of Phillip II’s personal intervention in the crisis.

5 September 1567 Duke of Alba establishes a special court called the “Council of Troubles” (Raad van Beroerten) referred to as the “Council of Blood” (Bloedraad) in the Netherlands, consisting of local judges but under his absolute control. By 1573 12,000 cases were tried resulting in 1,000 executions and 9,000 confiscations.

9 September 1567 Arrest of Egmont, general, former companion to Alba and Phillip II, and his fellow Protestant sympathizer, Horn.

November 1567 Battle of St Denis ends Huguenot siege of Paris. Huguenot force under Duc de Conde reinforced with German force under John Casimir, son of Count Frederick III the Elector Palatinate.

30 December 1567 Margaret of Parma resigns and departs Brussels.

1567-68 Approximately 60 thousand flee the Netherlands for neighboring German states and England.

March 1568 Peace Edict at Longjumeau between Catholics and Huguenots. Huguenot practices are restricted and Catholic forces are not disbanded.

March 1568 Huguenot forces besiege Chartres. Siege abandoned after two weeks.

20 April 1568 French Huguenot force, under the Seigneur of Villars defeated by Spanish force at Dalheim.

May 1568 Louis of Nassau invades the State of Groningen and establishes the Sea Beggars (“Watergeuzen”) to support him.

23 May 1568 German rebel force of 2,500 horse and 7,000 foot under Louis of Nassau defeats the army of the Count of Aremberg comprised of the Tercio of Sardinia, and several companies of Germans and Walloons at Heiligerlee near Groningen.
Battle of Heiligerlee

June 1568 Siege of Groningen. Rebels lift siege at the approach of Parma’s army and move to and establish a defense at Jemmingen.

“Nunc aut nunquam, Recuperare aut mort” (Freedom for the Fatherland and conscience)

inscription on Louis of Nassau’s colors

5 June 1568 Egmont and Horn are executed for high treason in Brussels.
21 July 1568 Rebel and Huguenot force under Prince Louis of Nassau routed at Jemmingen along the river Ems. Count Adolf of Nassau killed.

August 1568 Formal Treaty between William of Orange and the Huguenot leaders, the Duc De Conde and Admiral Coligny.

October-November 1568 William of Orange invades from Trier and retreats into Huguenot controlled France without engaging Alba’s forces.

December 1568- January 1569 Louis of Nassau leads Rebel army into France to assist Huguenot forces but is forced to retreat back into Germany.

January 1569 Wogagn of Bavaria, the Duke of Zweibrucken leads mercenary army into France to assist Huguenot forces.

February 1569 William of Orange gives Sea Beggars their first Letters of Commission. They are based in Emden, La Rochelle, a Huguenot controlled port in France, and Dover in England.

13 March 1569 French Catholic victory over Huguenots at Jarnac. Duc de Conde captured and killed.

March 1569 Duke of Alva forces the States-General to enact a 10% sales tax (the Tenth Penny) and a 5% sales tax on property (the Twentieth Penny) to provide funds that he, not the States-General, would control.

March 1569 Duke of Alba presides over book burning at Tournai.

April-July 1569 Siege of Navarreny by Catholic forces. Siege lifted by Huguenot force under Gabriel de Montgomery.
June 1569  Huguenot army under Admiral Coligny defeats Catholic force at La Roche L'Abbille

July-September 1569  Huguenot siege of Poitiers. Huguenot forces depart before city falls.

3 October 1569  French Catholic victory over Huguenots and rebels at Moncounbour


January 1570  Phillip II announces state of war with England and Elizabeth I is excommunicated by the Pope.

1570  Gillain de Fiennes appointed Admiral of the Sea Beggar Fleet by William of Orange in an effort to impose discipline

"Long live the Beggars! Christians, ye must cry.  
Long live the Beggars! pluck up courage then.  
Long live the Beggars! if ye would not die.  
Long live the Beggars! shout, ye Christian men."

—Beggar's Song (1570)

January-June 1570  Sea Beggars disrupt shipping and conduct raids along the coast of Friesland and Groningen

“I know well that the king wants to sign the peace which he wants to give us, with the tip of his sword”

Admiral Coligny, December 1570

June 1570  Huguenot army defeats Catholic forces at Arnay-le-Duc

8 August 1570  Peace Edict of St Germain between Catholics and Huguenots. As part of the agreement, Huguenots permitted to occupy the fortified cities (“places de sureté”) of La Rochelle, Cignac, Montauban and La Charitie for two years. Freedom of conscience and some freedom of worship in specific towns and nobles homes for Huguenots allowed.

1570  Scottish Brigade under command of Sir Walter Scott enters rebel service

1570-1573  Confiscation and sale of Catholic moveable property, buildings and land used to finance Rebel army and reimburse towns for war related losses.

March 1571  Massacre of Huguenots at Rouen

March 1572  Sea Beggars ejected from England

April 1, 1572  The Spanish garrison of Brill (Den Briel) called away to reinforce the French border. Planning initially to conduct a raid with 600 Walloon, Dutch, Scots and English Sea Beggars, Count Lumley de la Marck occupies the town.

7 April 1572-February 1574  Siege of Middleburg by Sea Beggars and Rebels.
April 1572 Count Bossu Alba’s Governor of Holland and Utrecht, surprises garrison of townspeople in Rotterdam and his Walloon and Spanish forces sack the city.

1572 With the taking of Brill, the improvement in the political fortunes of the Prince of Orange and the funds provided by Sea beggar activity, large number of mercenaries from Scotland, France and England go into Dutch service. Conduct of Duke of Alba’s soldiers causes a large number of cities to accept a garrison from the Prince of Orange.

April-July 1572 Veere, Vlissingen, Enkhuizen, Hoorn, Alkmaar, Haarlem and most of the towns of Walcheren Island join the revolt and all proclaim William of Orange Stadhouder.

May 1572 Louis of Nassau with German, English and Huguenot force take Valenciennes in France.

Sea Beggar captain Nicolaes Ruychaver, 1575

24 May-19 September 1572 Siege of Mons
31 May- Louis of Nassau with German, English and Huguenot force take Mons in France
  July- Mons besieged
17 July- Relieving force of French Huguenots defeated
  9 Sept- Relieving force under William of Orange defeated
19 Sept- Mons surrenders and garrison marches out under terms and retreats into Germany. Tercio of Lombardy sacks town.

21 June 1572 Famine in Scotland causes Scottish Privy Council to approve the raising of companies in Scotland, “in order that the idle men and soldier be not drawn to any desperate necessity, but may have commodity to serve and pass to the wars in Flanders.”
**July 1572** Sluys and Brugge captured by Huguenot and English forces.

**July 1572** Senior Pacheco is sent by Duke of Alba to be governor of Flushing and is executed by the townspeople. 400 Wallon soldiers for Middleburg are refused entry and the Sea Beggars and Wood Beggars (Bozgeuzen) converge with a force of 400 soldiers to help defend the city. Captain Thomas Morgan arrives at Flushing with three hundred English mercenaries. Three companies of Huguenots under Captains Henri, Tristan and Vitran arrive at Flushing as well. Tseraerts appointed Governor by Prince of Orange. Sir Humphrey Gilbert arrives with 10 companies of English mercenaries.

**July 1572** English and Huguenot forces capture Sluys but are driven out of Brugge but are driven off.

**19 July 1572** First State meeting of rebel provinces at Dortrecht

**23 July 1572** Rebel force of 17,000 German mercenaries and Waloons under William of Orange take Roermond.

"I agree to the scheme, provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France to reproach me with the deed"

on the St Bartholemew Day's massacre, Charles IX, King of France

**24 August-6 October 1572** St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of the Huguenot's in Paris during Henri of Navarre's wedding to Princess Marguerite of Valois, sister to Charles IX, the King of France. 1000,000-75,000 Huguenots massacred throughout France and military support for the rebels halted.

**26 August 1572** Prince of Orange crosses River Maas and main towns of Brabant, Mechelen and Oudenaarde, welcome him.

**1 October 1572** Mechelen sacked for three days by unpaid Spanish soldiers as an example to towns that support William of Orange.

**October 1572** Deist and Dendermonde purchase their safety for eight thousand florins each

**October 1572** English mercenaries besiege and fail to take Goes

**October 1572** Blockade established of entire coast of Netherlands with high fees required for trade in only non-military goods with the Spanish and low fees for trade with ports friendly to the rebels.

**1 November 1572** Zutphen sacked by Spanish soldiers

**22 November 1572** Naarden surrenders without resistance and is sacked by Spanish soldiers

"It is bewildering that your Majesty has so much trouble in getting financial support from your Subjects while the Hollanders and Zeelanders are ready to sacrifice their lives and property for a rebel like Orange."

Duke of Alba to Phillip II, February, 1573

**4 December 1572-12 July 1573** Siege of Haarlem. City defended by a garrison of 3,000 Scots, French, Germans and Waloons, 600 armed citizens of the city and a regiment of 300 women commanded by Vrau Kenau Hasselaer.

Dec- Relief column commanded by De La Marck routed. De La Marck
captured and executed

**Dec-Jan**- Resupply of garrisons by French, Scots, English and Walloon forces across frozen lake from Sassenheim

**February**- Spanish forces breach out wall only to find inner wall

**March-April**- Garrison conducts repeated sallies

**April**- Final attempt by William of Orange to relieve garrison fails

**12 July**- City surrenders and is ransomed for 24,000 guilders.

Garrison of 1,800 English, Scots, and Huguenots killed.

**11 February-6 July 1573** French Catholic Siege of Huguenots port of La Rochelle. Huguenots surrender town.

**1573** William of Orange joins Protestant Reformed Church

*‘They earn their meals through the mouth of a cannon’*

William of Orange, 26 February 1573, describing the Sea Beggars

**1573** States of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht acknowledge the Prince of Orange as Stadthouder. States granted right to meet when they want as well as input on decisions concerning religious policy and treaties.

**May 1573** Queen Elizabeth I and Duke of Alba agree not to support rebels in each others countries. Mercenaries and equipment still flow from England to rebels.

**August 1573** Spanish garrison of Haarlem mutinies. Mutiny put down after 18 days and mutineers executed.

*“Bij Alkmaar begint de victorie”*

(At Alkmaar began the victory)

*Dutch Saying*

Execution of the Defenders of Haarlem

**21 August- 8 October 1573** Siege of Alkmaar. Spanish forced to raise the siege after dykes are cut flooding the surrounding countryside.
“The burgeysys of Harlem were sente for too fyle the dytch whom poore men founde hyt so whote an ocupacion that they shoolde end theyr lyves all in that order, they cradv comasion at Doone Fredericks hand who aunswerd them that ht was farr more honorable for them to dye in so noble a pesse of sarvis as that was lyke men than to be stranglyd upon a gibett lyke dogs acordynge to theyr desert”

Use of civilians of Haarlem at Seige of Alkmaar, Walter Morgan, 1573

**August 1573.** De Valdez and his Spanish tercio de la Ligue and several companies of Walloons occupy The Hague and attempt to raid the countryside and seize surrounding villages and towns. Garrisons in surrounding towns comprises of French, Walloon, Dutch, Scots and English forces force his withdrawal back into Spanish held territory.

**September 1573** An army of 1,200 Flemings, French, Scots and English under de Poyet capture Gertruidenberg.

**10 October 1573** Battle of Zuider Zee between the Sea Beggars under Cornelis Dirckszoon, and the Spanish. Sea beggar victory with most of Spanish fleet, including the flagship “Inquisition” run aground. The battle leaves the Scheldt Estuary in Sea Beggar hands.

![Blockade of Middleburg by Sea Beggars](image)

**29 January 1574** Spanish fleet fails in attempt to relive the siege of Middleburg

**21 February 1574** Spanish garrison of Middleburg surrenders. Spanish soldiers given safe conduct to Spanish held territory.
February 1574-1576 Admiralty prize court operates at Flushing. Piracy ends and States establish regular navy.

April 1574 Elizabeth I and Don Luis Requensen agree on expulsion of each others rebels for their respective countries.

14 April 1574 Spanish victory at Mook over a force attempting to relieve siege of Lieden. Louis of Nassau, Henry of Nassau and Duke Christopher son of the Elector Palatine killed.

April 1574 Elizabeth I and Don Luis Requensen agree on expulsion of each others rebels for their respective countries.

26 April 1574 Spanish forces in Antwerp mutiny

> Here is my sword; plunge it, if you will, into my heart, and divide my flesh among you to appease your hunger; but expect no surrender as long as I am alive."

Burgomister of Leiden, 1574

26 May- October 1574 Siege of Leiden. Garrison consists of five companies of Burgher Guard

July- Dykes along the Meuse and Yssel river broken to prevent infantry attack on city walls

3 Oct- Water levels rise permitting Sea Beggar ships to approach and eliminate Spanish positions around city. Spanish forces flee as city is relieved.

Sack of Antwerp
17 November 1574 Alva replaced as Governor General by Don Luis Requensen who offers a general pardon and withdraws the “Tenth Penny” tax on behalf of Phillip II. No compromise offered for religious freedom.

February 1575 Leiden University founded out of gratitude the city and to meet the increasing need of Calvinist pastors.

1 March 1575 Don Luis Requensen dies.

January -2 July 1576 Siege of Zierikzee. Garrison surrenders to Spanish.

April 1576 Don Juan, brother of Phillip II, appointed to serve as Phillip II’s new Governor General.

6 May 1576 Peace Edict of Beaulieu between French Crown and Huguenots grants for the first time free exercise of Protestantism and the building of churches outside Paris. Henry II refuses to live up to the agreed terms.

27 May 1576 Louis De Boisot, Admiral of Holland and Zeeland, fails in attempt to relieve Zierikzee.

June 1576 Spanish capture Maastricht.

4 November 1576 Namur sacked by Spanish forces.

4 November 1576 Spanish mutineers seize and sack Antwerp in what is described as the Spanish Fury (Spaanse Furie).

8 November 1576. As a result of the Spanish Fury, the States-General agrees to the Pacification of Ghent (Pacificatie van Gent) calling for removal of all Spanish soldiers and unity to expel all foreign forces from the Netherlands. William of Orange retains titles.

December 1576 Elizabeth I makes loan to States General on the condition of cessation of negotiations with France. English concern over Spanish support of Mary Queen of Scots halves collaboration with Don Juan.

February 1577 Ceasefire declared, the Perpetual Edict, and States-General recognizes Don Juan as Phillip II’s Governor General.

28 April 1577 Spanish forces leave the Netherlands.

May 1577 Siege of La Charite by Catholic French forces under the Duc De Anjou. Huguenots surrender city.

June 1577 Siege of Issiore by Catholic French forces under the Duc De Anjou. Huguenots surrender city.

11 June 1577 Don Juan flees Brussels.

24 July 1577 Spanish forces return and take Namur.

August 1577 Elizabeth I sends 600 Scots soldiers to support rebels.
August 1577 Elizabeth I provides funds to Huguenots

6 September 1577 States General invites Prince of Orange to Brussels to advise them.

8 October 1577 States army besieges Namur

7 December 1577 Don Juan declared an enemy of the state by the States General.

January 1578 William of Orange becomes leader of the Netherlands government.

31 January 1578 Battle of Gembloux Rebel defeated by Army of Don Juan of Austria. Scots Brigade decimated.

February 1579- April 1580 Huguenot and Catholic Peasants join forces and revolt in France against local Catholic administrators and nobles.

7 July 1578- January 1579 Elizabeth I subsidizes an army raised by Count Palatine, John Casimir in support of rebels. Army enters Gelderland, refuses to fight the Spanish, occupies Ghent and eventually leaves.

1578 Amsterdam, Kampen and Deventer state their support for rebels.

1 August 1578 States army defeats Spanish army at Mechelen. Scots/English force under John Norris present.

1 October 1578 Don Juan dies and is replaced by his deputy, the Duke of Parma, as Phillip II’s Governor General.

January 1579 Seven provinces (Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Groningen, Overijsel, and Gelderland), sign the Union of Utrecht forming the Republic of the United Provinces with William of Orange as king. The Republic's lands also include Drente (one of the 17, but without the autonomous status of the others), and parts of Brabant, Limburg and Flanders, governed directly by their States-General. Each of the provinces had a high degree of autonomy, co-operating with each other mainly on
defense and on the international level in general, but keeping to their own affairs elsewhere. Central power is placed in the hands of the Council of State. Prince of Orange forces issue of universal religious toleration but fails. Catholicism only permitted in some states.

**January 1579** Southern provinces (Hainault, Artois, Walloon Flanders, Namur, Luxembourg and Limburg) sign the Union of Arras and accept the authority of Spain. Catholicism is the only accepted religion.

> “Persuade yourself that 500 of either English, Scottish, Burgundian, Walloons, French, Italians, Albanese, Hungarians, Poles or Spanish is worth 1,500 Almains”

On German soldiers, Sir Roger Williams, 1618

**February-29 June 1579** Siege of Maastricht by Spanish forces. Townspeople as well as States army garrison involved in defense.

1579 Peace Conference sponsored by Emperor Rudolph II at Cologne fails

17 May 1579 Southern provinces reconciled with Phillip II at the Peace of Arras, and offer military help to the Spanish

**June 1579** Five Scottish companies occupy Brussels on behalf of William of Orange

**July 1579** Mechelen and ‘s Hertogenbosch surrender to the Spanish.

**November 1579** Duke De Conde seizes Catholic town of La Fere

**March 1580** Count Rennenberg, Stadhouder of Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe and Overijssel goes over to Spanish side.

**May 1580** Henri of Navarre seizes Catholic town of Cahors

27 June-28 August 1580 Spain army under the Duke of Alba invades Portugal, sacks Lisbon and Phillip II seizes the throne

**August 1580** Prince of Orange declared an outlaw by Phillip II

**November 1580** Peace of Felix between Huguenots and Catholics allow Huguenots to maintain their towns for 6 more years.

1580 Count Renenberg, Stadhouder of Friesland, Drenthe and Overijssel returns cities of Groningen, Oldenzaal, Coevorden and Delfzijl to Spanish control.

* A jeton from Dortrecht, 1580
William of Orange as a mouse freeing the
Belgian lion (“Gnawing the lion’s collar, the
mouse liberates”)  Phillip II holds out the branch of peace to the Belgian
lion with a collar behind him while the Pope looks on
(“Offering to be bound, the lion refuses”)

23 January 1581  William of Orange and the States General invite Duke of Anjou, brother of the King of
France Henry III to serve as head of state for the United Provinces in an effort to insure French support
against Spain.

“As it's known to each person, that the Monarch of the Land is placed by God
over his subjects, to preserve those, and protect them from all injustice,
inconvenience, and violence, like a Sheppard to the preservation of his
Sheep: And that subjects are not created by God for the needs of the Monarch
... but the Monarch for the subjects' sake ... And thus when he does not do so
... should be taken not as a Monarch, but as a Tyrant”

The Bill of Abandonment

26 July 1581  The States-General 26 adopts Bill of Abandonment (de Acte van Verlatinghe), declaring
the rule of Phillips II was no longer valid.

1581 Capture of Tournai, Oudenaarde and Maastricht by Spanish

1581 Ghent occupied by the Scots Brigade

10 February 1582  Duke of Anjou arrives at Flushing, without the army promised by him and Henry III,
to assume control of the United Provinces.

April 1582 Spanish forces capture Oudenaarde

August 1582 Spanish forces capture Lier

1582 Steenwijk captured by Spanish

December 1582 French army of 10,000 under the command of Marshal Biron arrives and is quartered
outside Antwerp.
Frisan Coin, 1580

17 January 1583  Duke of Anjou's attempt to seize Antwerp with French soldiers defeated by armed citizens. Attempts to seize Bruges and Ostend fail as well but Aalst, Vilvoorde and Dunkirk fall to French. Duke of Anjou and his army flee Anwerp for Vilvoorde.

February 1583  Prince of Orange becomes head of government for the United Provinces

March 1583  Towns occupied by army of Duke of Anjou returned to United Provinces. Duke of Anjou returns to France but his army remains and Marchal Biron appointed supreme commander of the States army.

10 June 1583  Duke de Anjou dies leaving Henri of Navarre heir to the French throne

September 1583  Zutphen captured by Spanish

1583  Dunkirk, Nieuport, Lindhoven, Steenbergen and Sas-van-Gent captured by Spanish

December 1583  Marchal Biron and his army return to France.

July 1584  Formation of the Catholic or “Holy” League made up of French Catholics determined to make sure Henri of Navarre does not become King of France

March 1584  Ypres captured by Spanish

May 1584  Bruges captured by Spanish

10 June 1584  Duc de Anjou dies leaving Henri of Navarre as next in succession to the French throne

10 July 1584  William of Orange assassinated. His last words are “My God, have mercy on my soul and on these poor people.” Brussels, Ghent and Nijmegen surrender to the Spanish.

August 1584  Dendermonde captured by Spanish

August 1584 - 17 August 1585  Siege of Antwerp
**September 1584** Ghent captured by Spanish


**July 1585** Edict of Nemours makes practice of Protestant faith illegal in France. Henri III allies himself with the Catholic League.

**August -10 March 1585** Siege of Brussels. City captured by Spanish

**August -19 July 1585** Siege of Mechlin. City captured by Spanish

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**18 August 1585** William of Orange's oldest son, Maurice of Nassau, becomes Stadhouder of Holland and Zeeland in 1585, of Gelderland, Overijssel and Utrecht in 1590 and of Gronigen and Drenthe in 1620.

**20 August 1585**, Under the Treaty of Nonsuch negotiated by John Oldenbarneveldt for the United Provinces, Elizabeth I sends the [Earl of Leicester](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Netherland) be Governor General of the United Provinces with 5,000 - 6,000 troops to relieve Antwerp. English agree to provide 6 hundred thousand florins a year and gain control of the port cities of Flushing, Rotterdam, Enkhuizen, and Brill as security for repayment.

**September 1585** Pope Sixtus V excommunicates Henri of Navarre and the Duc de Conde, barring them from inheriting the French crown.

**October 1585** English troops promised in the Treaty of Nonsuch begin arriving

**December 1585** Earl of Leicester arrives in United Provinces

> “These towns which together with The Brill will be such a strength to you that you may rule these men, make war or peace as you list, even to make peace with the King of Spain so as to restore his authority here again”

On the occupation of towns in Holland, Earl of Leicester to Elizabeth I

**January 1586** Earl of Leicester appointed Governor General of United Provinces
1586 Venlo captured by Spanish

**June-July 1586** Sluis captured by Spanish. Of the original garrison of 1600 English, Flemings and Waloons, less that 700 surrender.

1586 Leicester takes Doesburg

1586 English garrison of Geertruidenberg sells town to Spanish

April 1586 Leicester announces restrictions on Holland’s trade with Southern Provinces causing division in the Council of State and States General.

August 1586 John Oldenbarneveldt appointed Lands Advocate of Holland and Keeper of the Great Seal, as such, he is the leading statesman of the United Provinces. In partnership with Maurice of Nassau and Louis of Nassau who control majority of army, he opposes Leicester’s effort to split the United Provinces.

22 September 1586 Battle of Zutphen. English force defeated.

November 1586 Leicester departs for England

November 1586 English garrisons of Grave, Deventer and a fort near Zutphen are bribed and turn them over to the Spanish

18 February 1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed in England.

June 1587 Leicester returns with additional troops

July 1587 Leicester announces to States General that Elizabeth I is in negotiations with the Duke of Parma and invited United Provinces to participate
August 1587  Elizabeth I and the King of Denmark funs an army of 20,000 mercenaries raised by John Casimir of the Palatinate. Army invades French Lorraine in support of Huguenots.

September 1587  Leicester attempts to capture Leiden and fails. English soldiers in States General army reluctant to obey orders.

20 October 1587  Huguenot army of Henri of Navarre defeats Catholic League army under the Duc de Joyeuse at Coutras. Joyeuse killed.

26 October 1587  German mercenary army of John Casimir defeated by Catholic army at Vimry.

October 1587  Leicester departs United Provinces.

November 1587  Catholic League army under Duc de Guise defeats German mercenary army under John Casimir of the Palatinate at Chartres.

8 December 1587  John Casimir's army surrenders and is escorted out of France.

January 1588  Leicester submits resignation as Governor General.


May-August 1588  Fleet of United Provinces blockades coast to prevent Spanish forces in Netherlands linking up with the ‘Great Armada’.

July 1588  Henri II of France recognizes Cardinal De Bourbon as heir the throne. Duc de Guise named commander of all royal forces.

19 July 1588  William of Orange’s son, Maurice of Nassau, appointed Captain General of the Army of the states in Flanders and Brabant. He also commands armies paid for by the States of Holland and Zeeland.

31 August 1588  Maurice of Nassau appointed Captain-General and Admiral-General of the United Provinces.

23 December 1588  Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Guise are assassinated by Henri III.

1589  Maurice of Nassau becomes Stadholder of Utrecht, Gelderland and Overysel.

26 April 1589  Henri III and Henri of Navarre sign a truce in order to join forces against the Catholic League.

June 1589  Royalist Catholic and Huguenot forces besiege Catholic League forces under the Duc de Mayenne in Paris.

10 April 1589  English garrison of Geertruidenberg bribed and the city is turned over to the Spanish.

July 1589  Henri III of France is assassinated and names Henri of Navarre as his successor.

21 September 1589  Huguenot army of 5,000 victory over Catholic League and Spanish army of 24,000 at Arques.
21 September 1589 English expedition under Lord Willoughby arrives in France to support Henry of Navarre.

23 September 1589 Henri of Navarre reinforced with 1200 Scots and 4,000 English mercenaries.

1 November 1589 Huguenot attack on Paris but army withdraws due to lack of artillery

21 November 1589 Huguenot leader, Henri of Navarre becomes Henry IV of France

1590-1597 Spanish troops driven out of the United Provinces.
1590 Breda taken
1591 Zutphen, Deventer forts along the IJssel River, Delfzijl, Hulst and Nijmegen taken
1592 Groningen joins and Seenwijk and Coevorden taken
1593 Geetruiden taken
1594 Groningen taken
1597 Rheinburg, Grol, Oldenzaal and Enschede taken
1597 Spanish defeat at the battle of Turnhout

14 March 1590 Huguenot/Royalist army of 10,000 victory over Catholic League and Spanish army of 17,000 at Ivry

April 1590 English provide 5,000 mercenaries to support Henry IV

7 May-9 September 1590 Huguenot/Royalist forces besiege Catholic League Paris

25 July 1590 The States-General decrease the power of the Council of State and assumes role as the “sovereign institution” of the United Provinces

3 September 1590 Duke of Parma invades France and raises siege of Paris with an army of 26,000. Spanish garrison installed.

8 October 1590 Huguenot/Royalist siege of Rouen

28 November 1590 Duc de Mayenne and Catholic League forces enter Paris

May 1591 English expedition of 3,000 English soldiers under Sir John Norris arrives in France to support Henry IV.

15 August 1591 English expedition under Earl of Essex sent to France to support Henri IV

October 1591- 22 May 1592 Siege of Rouen by Henri IV
   October 1591- January 1592 English and French forces establish siege
   January 1592- English forces recalled to England
   April 1592- Duke of Parma invades France and raises siege

25 July 1592 Henri IV of France takes Catholic communion

2 December 1592 Duke of Parma dies at Arras

27 February 1593 Henri IV crowned king of France at Chartres
March-June 1593 Siege of Gertruydenberg by Spanish forces. Scots Brigade with 1500 troops present

1593-1594 Brussels government truce with Huguenot leader, Henri of Navarre

1593-94 Peasant revolts in France

1594 Spanish mutineers take over the village of Zichem, raising “contributions” towards their own upkeep as far as way as Brussels, a 50 mile distance.

1594 Archduke Ernest, brother of Rudolph, Holy Roman Emperor becomes Governor General of the Southern Provinces.

22 March 1594 Henri IV enters Paris

1594 Groningen captured by Spanish

1594-99 Garrison of Bommel by Scots Brigade

January 1595 Henri IV declares war on Spain

1595 Archduke Ernest dies. The Count of Fuentes replaces him

1595 Spanish capture Cambrai from France

June 1595 The French defeat the Spanish supported Holy League in Fontaine-Francaise in Burgundy

August 1595 Henri IV receives absolution from Pope Clement VIII

“There are three things everyone says and knows to be false, that Elizabeth the Queen is a virgin, that I am good Catholic and that Cardinal Albert is a good general”

Henry IV of France

January 1596 Archduke Cardinal Albert appointed Governor General of Spanish Netherlands

1-22 April 1596 Siege of Calais. Spanish army besieges French garrison
17 April Maurice of Nassau sends fleet to lift siege but is blockaded before approaching city
21 April Elizabeth I offers assistance if Calais is surrendered to England
22 April Calais falls and 5,000 man garrison and the townspeople are massacred

31 June-1 July 1596 A joint English-Dutch fleet raids Cadiz in Spain destroying what was to become a second Great Armada to attack England.
Fleet consists of 57 ships, and a total of 6,000 soldiers, 2,000 from the army of the United Provinces commanded by Sir Francis Vere and consisting of Dutch, German, Waloon, Scots and Irish soldiers.

31 June-18 August 1596 Siege of Hulst. Spanish force 15,000 defeats garrison of 5,000 under command of Count Solms, commander of Zeeland State Regiment.
31 October 1596 France and England recognize the Republic of the United Provinces. Republic expected to field an army of 8,000 and turn over 4,000, including the five English Regiments, for service in France.

22 January 1597 Battle of Turnhout. The 800 man Army of Maurice of Nassau defeats 5,000 man force commanded by Count Varax. Maurice’s force consists of Vere and 8 companies of English, Docray with 8 companies of English, Murray with 8 companies of Scots and Kloetingen and La Corde with 12 companies of Dutch and Zeelanders. Hohenlo commanded the cavalry. The force of Italian, Spanish, German and Waloon veterans wiped out.

1597 States Army captures Reinberg

March 1597 Sack and capture of Amiens by Spanish.

March- 19 September 1597 Siege of Amiens. Spanish driven out of Amiens

“You must show your teeth to the Spaniard, if you wish for a quiet life”

Henry IV

13 April 1598 Henry IV signs Edict of Nantes granting freedom of worship, control of several cities and freedom to hold office to French Huguenots.

2 May 1598 Spanish peace treaty with France (Treaty of Vervins)

1598 Philip II cedes the southern states of the Netherlands to Archduke Albert of Austria and his wife Isabella.

1598 Francis Mendoza, Admiral of Aragon appointed military commander of Spanish forces

1598 Mendoza invades Holy Roman Empire States of Clever, Juliers, Munster and Berg with army of 8,000 Spanish, Italian, Wallon and German soldiers

11 October- capture of Burik

15 October- capture of Rheinberg

30 October- capture of Rees

2 November- capture of Emmerich

“Never before was it written or heard of that so great an extent of country could be defended with so few troops, that an invasion of so superior a hostile force could be prevented, especially as it appeared that all the streams and rivers were frozen”

Elizabeth I on Maurice of Nassau, 1598

October-November 1598 Maurice of Nassau adopts defensive strategy, preventing Aragon’s invasion of United Provinces

1598-99 Spanish Garrison of Antwerp mutinies

13 September 1598 Phillip II dies
25 February 1599 Edict of Nantes allows limited freedom of religion and participation in society to Huguenots and a separate military presence for eight years in specific cities.

September 1599 Archduke Albert arrives at Brussels

June 1600 States Army victory at the battle of Nieuwpoort. Francis Mendoza captured. Scots Brigade present

July 1600 Spanish army mutinies

5 July 1601-20 September 1604 Siege of Ostend. The besieging army numbers approximately 20,000. The besieged force consists of about 8,000 initially under the command of Sir Francis Vere. There are English, Scots, Dutch, Flemings, Frenchmen and Germans in the garrison force.

7 January 1602- Spanish forces attempt to take Ostend by storm. The defenders open a sluice which brings seawater into the attackers' trenches, drowning many and sweeping others out to sea.

1602- Estimated that 4000 men died in the fourth year of the siege within Ostend and probably twice as many in the trenches of the besieging force.

September 1604- The States General grant permission to surrender.

20 September 1604 The articles of capitulation grant the defenders full military honors. Garrisons marches out, flags flying and drums beating.

July 1601 Siege of Rheinberg by Maurice of Nassau. Spanish defeated.

July 1601 Capture of Meurs by Maurice of Nassau and States Army.

20 March 1602 Dutch East Indies Company established

June 1602-August 1602 3,500 Spanish and Italian mutineers occupy village of Hoogstraten

July 1602 Van Der Berg and a Spanish army attempt siege of mutineers at Hoogstraten but retreat at approach of States Army

July 1602 Maurice of Nassau enters Hoogstraten

August 1602 Mutineers permitted to operate independently and are given Grave to garrison

July 1602- August 1602 Siege of Grave by States Army. Spanish defeated.

July 1602 Francis Mendoza exchanged for all States Army prisoners held by the Spanish.

3 October 1602 A joint English-States fleet under Sir Robert Mansel and Admiral Obdam destroys Spanish fleet in the English Channel

24 March 1603 Elizabeth I of England dies and James VI of Scotland ascends to the throne of England as James I.

May-August 1604 Siege of Sluis by States army. Sluis falls.

1604 Spanish peace treaty with England (Treaty of London)

1607 A Dutch fleet under Admiral Jacob Van Heemskerck destroys Spanish fleet off of Gibraltar
**1609-1621** Twelve-Year Truce between Spain and the United Provinces. Maurice of Nassau opposes the truce but is forced to accept it by States General and Grand Pensionary, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. Religious and political issues cause conflict resulting in Maurice of Nassau arresting his opponents in 1618. Oldenbarnevelt charged with treason for negotiating the treaty with Spain and supporting religious toleration for Catholics and protestants other than Calvinists. He is sentenced to death and was hung on 13 May 1619.

**February 1618** On the death of his elder brother Philip William, Maurice of Nassau becomes Prince of Orange.

**1619** Hugo Grotius (*Huigh de Groot*), Dutch jurist and humanist supports Oldenbarnevelt against Maurice of Nassau and is condemned to prison for life.

**May-June 1621** Siege of Huguenot city of St Jean D'Angely by Royalist forces. Huguenots defeated.

**August- September 1621** Siege of Huguenot city of Mauntauban. Royalist forces withdrawn.

**1621** Archduke Albert dies and Isabella, his wife becomes Governor of Spanish Netherlands.

**1621** Phillip III of Spain dies and his son Phillip IV becomes king.

**1621** Grotius escapes and flees to Paris.

**August – October 1622** Siege of La Rochelle by Catholic Royalists. Huguenots surrender.

**1622** Siege of Bergen-op-Zoop. Spanish siege lifted. City defended by Scots Brigade. Army of Ernst Von Mansfeld helps lift siege and goes into the service of the United Provinces.

**19 October 1622** Peace Edict of Montpellier leaves La Rochelle as the last Huguenot city in France.

**December 1623** Peit Heyn captures and occupies the port of Bahia, Brazil.

**1624** Alliance between United Provinces and France.

**1625** In Paris, Grotius writes “Concerning the Law of War and Peace” (*De jure belli ac pacis*), accepted as the first definitive text on international law.

**1625** Charles I of England marries Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII and English support for Huguenots ends.

**1625** Spanish commander Ambrosio Spinola conquers Breda.

**1625** Maurice of Nassau dies.

**1625** Frederick Henry, younger brother of Maurice, succeeds as Stadtholder of the five provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Overijssel and Gelderland, and as Captain and Admiral-general of the United Provinces.
Frederick Henry Prince of Orange, Count of Nassau

“Piet Hein, Piet Hein,
Piet Hein zijn naam is klein (his name is short)
Zijn daden benne groot (his deeds are big)
Hij heeft gewonnen de Zilvervloot” (he has won the Silver Fleet)

Lyrics of Popular Dutch Contemporary Song

1627 United Provinces capture Grol

August–October 1627 Siege of Huguenot city of La Rochelle. City capitulates.

May 1628 Piet Heyn captures Spanish treasure fleet in the port of Havanna.

1628 Siege of La Rochelle, a Huguenot stronghold, by the King of France

1628 Piet Heyn appointed Admiral General of the United Provinces

1629 Piet Heyn killed in sea battle with Spanish at Dunkirk


16 June 1629 Peace Edict of Alais ends Huguenot military and civic presence in Catholic France.

July 1629 Spanish army captures Amersfort in Utrecht

19 August 1629 Capture of Wesel by States Army forces Spanish withdrawal from Utrecht

1630 Gustavus II Adolphus King of Sweden lands in Germany
1630 Mecklenburg
1630 Demmin
1630 Greifenhagen
1631 Kolberg
1631 Frankfurt On Oder
1631 Werben
1631 Breitenfeld
1631 Wurzburg
1631 Mainz
1632 Lech
1632 Furth
1632 Alte Veste
16 November 1632  Gustavus II Adolphus killed at the battle of Lutzen

June 1632  Capture of Venlo, Straelen, Sittard and Roermond

10 June - 22 August 1632  Siege of Maastricht by States army. City surrenders.

13 April 1634  United Provinces and France sign a subsidy treaty stipulating no negotiations with Spain for one year

September 1634  Cardinal Infante Ferdinand brother of Phillip IV defeat Swedish Army at Nordlingen, Ferdinand appointed Governor of Spanish Netherlands and moves his army to Brussels.

1636  Maarten Tromp appointed Admiral General of the United Provinces

1637  Capture of Breda

1637-1639  Spanish Netherlands conduct raids on United Provinces shipping from the port of Dunkirk

1639-1640  Bishops Wars between Scotland and England

21 October 1639  Spain sends an armada to Flanders, with 20,000 troops, which is defeated by Admiral Maarten Tromp in the Battle of the Downs

1640  Catalonia revolts against Spain and joins France

1640  Portugal wins independence from Spain

1640  France captures Arras from Spanish Netherlands

1641-1649  Ireland in rebellion

1641  Cardinal Infante Ferdinand dies

1641  William, son of Frederick Henry, is married to Mary Stuart, eldest daughter of Charles I.

August 1642  Charles I raises his standard at Nottingham to raise an army against Parliament

1642  States General declares United Provinces neutrality in the War of Three Kingdoms

23 October 1642  inconclusive battle of Edgehill between English Royalists and Parliamentarians

1642-1646  Frederick Henry provides support to Stuart cause in the form of arms and transportation despite the will of the States General

1643  French defeat the Spanish at the Battle of Rocroi.

2 July 1644  English Parliamentarian and Scots Covenanter victory over English Royalists

1644  States army captures Sas van Gent

1644  Alliance between United Provinces and France renewed
**Reforms of Maurice of Nassau to the Staatse Leger**

Beginning in 1589 Maurice of Nassau sought to reform the Army of the States General. This process began with the use of constant drilling of the soldiers in the handling of their individual weapons and in the movement of formations. The drill book *The Exercise of Armes*, drawn by De Geyn in 1608, depicts graphically the individual musket and pike drill introduced by Maurice of Nassau. Soldiers were taught to count the different movements in unison in battle to aid in coordinated formation movement as well as, in the case of musketeers, to allow for effective volley firing. Infantry formations were 10 ranks in depth and each half regiment of would have 250 pike men flanked on either side by 80 musketeers. This formations would, in turn be flanked by cavalry ands supported by a second and third echelon in a checkerboard pattern. The words of command for the army, comprised of Dutch, German, French, Scottish, and English soldiers were shared by all soldiers regardless of nationality. Commands of preparation, in addition to commands of execution, were introduced as well. Soldiers were expected to dig their own defensive positions and local civilians were, for the first time, not forced or paid to dig for the army. Cavalry drills were not introduced but lancers were dispensed with and all cavalry were armed with carbine (harquebus) and or pistols.

The willingness of the soldiers to accept the innovation of constant drill and to drill during the winter months, during which there had typically been no activity, was, in all probability, based on the knowledge that they would be paid on a regular basis. This made it possible for the soldiers to be worked harder and prevent them from being the burden on the population and danger to civilians that the irregularly paid Spanish, Italian, German and Southern Province soldiers fighting against the United Province were.
A Description of the uniforms and equipment of the troops arriving in the Low Countries

“There is a description of these soldiers, in Kervyn de Lettenhove’s *Les Huguenots et les Geux*, Tome III, PG 46. which states that the harquebusiers maintained the uniforms they had worn in England: blue cassocks with yellow and red facing, and red crosses. However while some of these regular troops wore uniforms, most of the mercenary companies would not have adopted any particular colours. In general, equipment would have remained functional, with musketeers and harquebusiers clothed in fustian doublets, chain mail jackets, and sometimes corselets and steel helmets, carrying a sword and dagger. The pikemen might have been more heavily armed, wearing steel corselets and metal poultrons, vambraces and tasses and most certainly a steel cap. However for the sake of mobility, this equipment was often limited to a breast and back plate, and in the low countries there were few pitched battles that warranted the use of heavy armor. Many of the mercenary companies were very poorly clad, and existed in extreme discomfort pending payment for their services; arms and equipment were often in short supply.”

Appendix C, Page 52, *The Expedition in Holland, 1572-1574 from the manuscript of Walter Morgan*

Pictures from Jacob De Gheyn’s *Exercise of Arms, 1607*

**Origin of the term “beggars” (geuzen)**

On the 5th of April 1566 Louis of Nassau and Count Brederode, both nobles sympathetic to the Protestants of the Netherlands, along with 400 of their fellow nobles presented the Compromise of Breda to Margaret of Parma, the illegitimate sister of King Phillip of Spain and his regent in the Netherlands. The Compromise was a request for an end to the work of the Inquisition and a removal of Spanish occupying forces for the Netherlands. The regent was at first alarmed at the appearance of so large a body, but one of her councilors, Berlaymont, was heard to exclaim, “What, madam, is your highness afraid of these beggars” (“ces gueux”)? At a meeting held by some 300 confederates at the Hotel Culemburg three days later, Brederode in a speech declared that if need be they were all ready to become beggars in their country’s cause. The French word for beggar is gueux which was rapidly transformed into geuzen
and became the proud title of those who opposed Spanish rule in the Netherlands and “Vivent le geux” was heard on the streets of the Netherlands.

The “geuzenpenning”, an original Dutch medal in the Rijksmuseum with the image of Phillip II, cups to drink the health of a charitable donor, and a beggars bowl.

An original beggars medal in the Rijksmuseum with the inscription ”Better Turk than Papist”

Typical Spanish Flag
Organization of the Spanish Tercio

A tercio is a regiment of ten companies under a field marshal (maestre de campo). Each company consisted of approximately 300 men, with two of the ten companies made up of musketeers and the rest of pike. The tercios fought in squares with all the pike in the center and the muskets surrounding the pike on all sides.

Example French Catholic flags

Example French Huguenot Flag

Role and Rights of Women in 16th -17th century Holland

“The man is head of the family, but the woman is the neck, that allows the head to move”

*an old Dutch Saying*
Calvinist Doctrine expected obedience of the wife towards the husband and the daughter towards her father. Dutch women, however, had unique rights. The Dutch legal system in the 17th century allowed a woman to institute legal proceedings against somebody, even against her husband. If she was unmarried and had not reached the age of adulthood (25) she needed a guardian. An unmarried pregnant woman could persecute the alleged father in a paternity procedure. She could force him to marry her and if he was already married she could demand a dowry, payment of childbirth costs and an allowance for the child. Women were also able to own property.

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