

THE SCARF WITH THE LION.

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By the end of 1940 Nazi Germany was in occupation of most of the western part of Continental Europe. Sweden and Switzerland were neutral and - in a way - so was Spain. In winter 1941-1942 the Germans and their allies had also taken large parts of western Russia.

In the beginning no one in Great Britain knew exactly what was going on in the Nazi occupied territories. As far as the Scout and Guide movements in the Nazi occupied territories were concerned this also applied to the Boy Scouts International Bureau (BSIB - now World Bureau WOSM) in London and to the many foreign Scouts who had found refuge on the British Isles.

Some occupied countries had a German Army (Wehrmacht) administration, which wanted peace and quiet and particularly in the early years was rather lenient. Scouting and Guiding were permitted because it was felt that the wearing of uniform was restricted and camping not allowed. But other countries, the Netherlands and Norway, had an (Austrian) SS (*) administration, which from the beginning was aiming at nazifying the country. The German Nazis had the strange idea that the population of the Netherlands was a strayed off German tribe and that, after a little Nazi re-education, the people would gladly accept the admission of its country as a province of the Third Reich. Originally the Netherlands, including the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, belonged to the German Empire. That is until in 1568 the people rose in rebellion and the Eighty Years War of Independence began. During it the Independent Republic of the Seven United Netherlands was founded which, when a Peace Treaty was signed in 1648, was recognised by all European countries, including the German Empire. Since the Netherlands went their separate ways.

Yet the Nazis, especially the SS fraction still thought of the Dutch as being German whereas the Dutch, apart from the SS fraction in the Dutch National Socialist Party, rejected this idea. Shortly after having occupied the Netherlands the SS administration told the NJS = Nationale Jeugdstorm (National Youth Storm) the Dutch Nazi movement's youth organisation, to call a meeting of the top leaderships of all Dutch youth organisations, including the largest ones: Scouting and Guiding. The NJS offered to disband its organisation if all the other organisations would do the same where after the leaders would be invited to create one national youth organisation. As all present expected that this would be an organisation with a strong Nazi flavour, all rejected the idea.

So in April 1941 by order of the SS-leadership Dutch Scouting and Guiding were disbanded and banned. The NHQ staffs were arrested, the Scout Shops stripped of everything and all possession such as meeting places, campsites, tents and other equipment were confiscated and handed over to the Hitler Youth or the local NJS. Further the individual Scouts and Guides were ordered to wrap up their uniforms, badges (also collections), handbooks, etc. and to surrender the parcel at the local police station. The wearing of pin badges and even Scout or Guide belts was an offence. Disobedience was to be punished and indeed was.

The news reached England. And the opinion grew that when the Netherlands would be liberated there would still be Scouts and Guides but without any uniform at all. But it was also realised that during the liberation period the Scouts and Guides would be able to render special services. So in London, the leaders of the British and the Dutch movements met and discussed the problem. Amongst the latter Prince Bernhard, Commander in Chief of the Free Dutch Forces but also Royal Commissioner and Chairman of the Dutch National Scout Council. It was decided to have manufactured Dutch membership badges, armbands with the word "Padvinder" (=Scout), and the Scarf with the Lion, the latter being the state symbol of the Netherlands. The intention being that as soon as the Allied forces would be liberating the

country these items would be given to the re-emerging Scouts. So that when doing their public services the Allied military would be able to identify them easily.

The Scarf with the Lion was produced in England. It was ribbed khaki with an embroidered golden Dutch Lion bordered brown and standing on a ribbon with the word Nederland.

In September 1944 the liberation of the southern part of the Netherlands began. Wherever the Germans retreated and the Canadian, Polish or British soldiers arrived - sometimes even during the dangerous transition period - the Dutch Scouts and Guides re-emerged as had been expected but ---- most of them were in full uniform, sometimes just a bit too tight. (+) It was found that hardly anybody had obeyed the order to hand in the uniforms at the police station and if some frightened parents had done so the policemen had mostly sent them home again. Also most of the Scouts and Guides had managed to continue meeting during the occupation and had themselves manufactured ample means of identification. Between September 1944 and May 1945 the whole country was liberated and the process repeated itself everywhere.



The Scarf with the Lion was actually not needed and not used! So it was decided that the Scarf with the Lion would be used as a special award. In June 1945 the revived NHQ distributed a letter asking the districts and/or group Scoutmasters to compose a list giving the names of those who - during the occupation - had been active in the resistance and who - as soldiers of the Underground Forces - had actually participated in the fighting during the liberation of their city or region.

Thereafter all over the country, sometimes in the presence of the Royal Commissioner Prince Bernhard, there were ceremonies during which the Scarf with the Lion, in combination with the National Service (Nationale Dienst) Badge, was presented to those who deserved it. The idea was that the Scarf would be worn in combination with the group's scarf in such a way that of the latter about 1 or 1,5 centimetre would be visible.



But as in those days the scarf was still worn over the closed shirt collar, the combination was rather thick and uncomfortable during active Scouting. So it was soon worn at special ceremonial occasions only. But not for long. Those who had not been involved soon made it clear that they considered those entitled to wear the scarf as show offs. Remarks were made and the owners ceased to wear them. The real meaning of the Scarf with the Lion got lost and where it is being displayed (in museums etc.) the description used is seldom correct.

In the forties and fifties the resistance was soon pushed to the background, its significance diminished by those who had not taken part. Many of its former members experienced that it was better not to mention or display their pasts as they were often considered to be unreliable adventurers that one had better not employ.

(*) SS = Schutz-Staffel = Protection Unit or Bodyguard. Originally a small group founded to protect Adolf Hitler and other Nazi leaders. After 1933 enlarged. Later there were 4 units: A) One united with the normal police forces, plus the Gestapo = Geheime Staatspolizei or Secret State Police, and the Sicherheitsdienst or Security Service. Operating in Germany but also in all occupied territories. B) The Waffen SS = crack fighting regiments but not under the German army's command, C) the Toteskopf SS = the Skull SS in charge of the concentration and extermination camps. D) the Allgemeine SS = General SS an organisation of which Party members could become a member and membership of which could be of importance to e.g. business men wanting to extend their business, civil servants wanting promotion etc. etc.

(+) Not all the Scouts wore the Scout uniform when the Allied soldiers arrived. Some had been members of the Resistance also called the Underground. A secret organisation, which had sabotaged the German installations, punished traitors and when the Allies came nearer made attacks on the German supply routes. When they got in the frontline they donned the blue uniforms of the Underground Army and joined the Allied soldiers. The Scouts amongst them wore that uniform too. Scouts in Scout uniform were permitted to serve the Liberators as guides, map-readers, interpreters etc but under no condition were they allowed to carry firearms when in Scout uniform.