

CS suspended for tweet

ROTTERDAM | The civil servant who said terrorist Islamic State (Isis) is a Zionist plot will not return to her job and may be sacked all together, justice minister Ivo Opstelten said on Friday. Yasmina Haifi, on detachment at the National Cyber Security Centre, recently sent a tweet saying the Islamic State does not exist and is a Zionist plot to discredit Muslims. She later deleted the tweet saying: 'Realize the political sensitivity in relation to my work'. She was suspended that same afternoon. Minister Opstelten was shocked by the content of the tweet, he told Dutch media.

Foreign staff popular

AMSTERDAM | Dutch universities get nearly all their extra staff members from abroad, particularly from Germany and China. No less than one-third of all academic staff have a non-Dutch passport. The information comes from as yet unpublished figures from the Dutch university association VSNU, recently reported in the Volkskrant. The figures cover the years 2007 to the end of 2013. In that period, virtually all the growth in university jobs, around 3,000 positions, went to PhD students, researchers, and professors from abroad. The number of Dutch personnel remained stable at 20,000.

Forced to call Mom

NEW YORK | A frustrated mother developed an app to force her teenage children to respond to messages and calls. "It takes away texting, it takes away the gaming, it takes away calling their friends. The child will always be able to call 911," developer Sharon Standifird explained to CBS. With one tap, a list of only parent-selected contacts comes up. The child can call, get the password and unlock the phone. Standifird says her son responds to her texts and calls more quickly than he used to. "Ignore No More" is available only for Android phones on Google Play.

Public transport safer

AMSTERDAM | Public transport has become safer since the introduction of the OV chip card in 2009, Trouw said recently, based on its own research. According to Trouw, the improvement comes from a fall in the number of passengers who do not pay. Trouw spoke to the directors of the three main public transport providers in the cities, who said most of the aggression comes from confronting these people. Aggressive incidents and threatening behavior in the Amsterdam metro fell from 13% in 2009 to a mere 2.5% in 2013. Throughout the whole of the public transport system in Rotterdam, these incidents decreased from 13.1% to 1.6% and in The Hague from 9.1% to 3%.



Forgotten WWII casualties remembered



Photo: Radio Nederland Wereldroep

Newly published 'Antilleans in the Second World War' highlights WWII casualties on the Antilles. KAREN D.R. DE CORRALES talked to the author.

The story of 'Antilleans in the Second World War' begins on May 4, 2006, the day author Jos Rozenburg – then Head of Operations of the Dutch forces in the Caribbean – was present at the yearly memorial service for the casualties of war on Curaçao. His surprise at the number of casualties featured on the memorial plaque launched him into a quest to unveil the drama behind those 129 names.

The role of the Antilles during that memorable world conflict was determined chiefly by the importance of oil for the fuelling of allied aircraft, vehicles and ships. The oil refineries, built on Aruba and Curaçao between 1915 and 1927 to process Venezuelan oil from Lake Maracaibo, understandably came under German attack. However, this attack was more intense than is commonly known. Mr. Rozenburg says: "If the supply from the Antilles had not been safeguarded, the war could have lasted some two years longer".

Although clearly written by a soldier (including elaborate descriptions of defense measures), the book is transparent in its set-up and obviously well-researched. Featuring cliffhangers at the end of each chapter and anecdotes from the war for some extra color; it is an accessible, educational, and enjoyable read, culminating in the German attack on the night of February 16, 1942. Rozenburg thrillingly describes how the U-

boats stalked the islands undetected for three days, like a shark circling its prey.

Large-scale damage was avoided, despite the absence of blackout measures and the strategically chosen moonless night, owing to three crucial occurrences. Admiral Raeder, who envisioned a surprise attack on the refineries, was thwarted by his second in command, Hitler-favorite Dönitz, who had the U-boats attack the tankers first, at the last minute. In addition, the main cannon on the U-156 was damaged when first fired, because the crew forgot to remove the cap protecting it from seawater. Finally, ammunition ship Henry Gibbins – loaded with a substantial amount of explosives – did not sail out when scheduled because of a series of circumstances, and so did not cross the path of the departing U-156; an encounter which would have caused massive destruction.

The attack mobilized the allied forces into high alert and an effective defense of the islands and the allied oil supply for the rest of the war. However, many tankers, battleships, and cargo ships were lost to continued U-boat attacks. The suspense of the narrative recounting the events on the islands during the Second World War does not, however, detract from the heart of the matter. The account is clearly meant to provide the proper historical framework in which

to view the plight of the Antillean war victims, who are mentioned individually and in detail. The importance and prowess of well-known heroes such as Boy Ecury and George Maduro notwithstanding, this report was written to ensure that other, lesser-known Antillean victims are not forgotten. A look at three of them:

On November 18, 1939, barely a month old, Maria Theresia Wensing was among the first victims – along with her mother and three-year-old brother – when the S.S. Simon Bolivar, steaming from Amsterdam to Curaçao, was downed by two mines in the cold North Sea. Thelma Esther Polak from Saba, educated to help people in need, was deported from her workplace as an apprentice nurse at an insane asylum in Apeldoorn on January 22, 1943. She would become one of the Jewish victims at the Sobibor death camp in Poland six weeks later. Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) Cavalry Brigadier Petrus Alfoncius Anastacia, born on Curaçao, was felled far from home by sickness and hardships suffered at the Tsumori labour camp near Osaka, Japan on February 7, 1945.

Jos Rozenburg is a remarkably modest and likeable individual. His military career to date is impressive and well-rounded, and his praiseworthy, eight-year-spanning research has uncovered – among other things – 37 additional Antillean war victims.

Asked about his personal motivation to embark on this crusade, he described the attraction to the tropics he first discovered in Indonesia, extending to his appreciation of its friendly people. Later, he found himself feeling the same way in the Antilles, where the Dutch language facilitated communication and his knowledge of the locals grew.

This is why he felt compelled to write the as of yet underexposed, laudable story of those who also fought and died in the name of our freedom. Mr. Rozenburg is of the opinion that there is a neglect to be righted here. As such, he has taken steps to have the 37 newly available names included on monuments worldwide. In addition, The National Committee for 4 and 5 May was approached to more befittingly pay homage to the Antillean casualties of war.

An English translation is currently being finished by the author himself, which will hopefully become available at the end of 2014. This will also be announced on the website Antillesatwar.com. Finally, he hopes a translation in Papiamentu may be realized, so the population on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao – alongside the people of Saba, Sint Maarten and St. Eustatius – may have better access to the proud role their ancestors played during the Second World War.



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