



The Eighty Years War and
the Dutch Republic



The background image is a historical painting depicting a naval battle. The top portion shows an aerial perspective of several ships with various flags and soldiers appearing to be in the air, possibly during a boarding action. The bottom portion shows a close-up of a large wooden sailing ship with multiple masts and sails, surrounded by other vessels and a sea filled with smoke and the chaos of battle. The scene is filled with the details of 17th-century naval warfare, including rigging, cannons, and the presence of many crew members.

Background Info

- The Netherlands was a wealthy area within the Holy Roman Empire
 - It was a rich trading center
 - A key region in the manufacture of textiles
 - A large banking and insurance center
 - Had lots of shipping and dominated the global “spice trade”
- Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, granted them significant regional autonomy within the HRE to keep them happy (his hands were full with a lot of other troubles)
- When Philip II took over as King of Spain in 1556 he also took over the “Spanish Netherlands”, which included the whole region

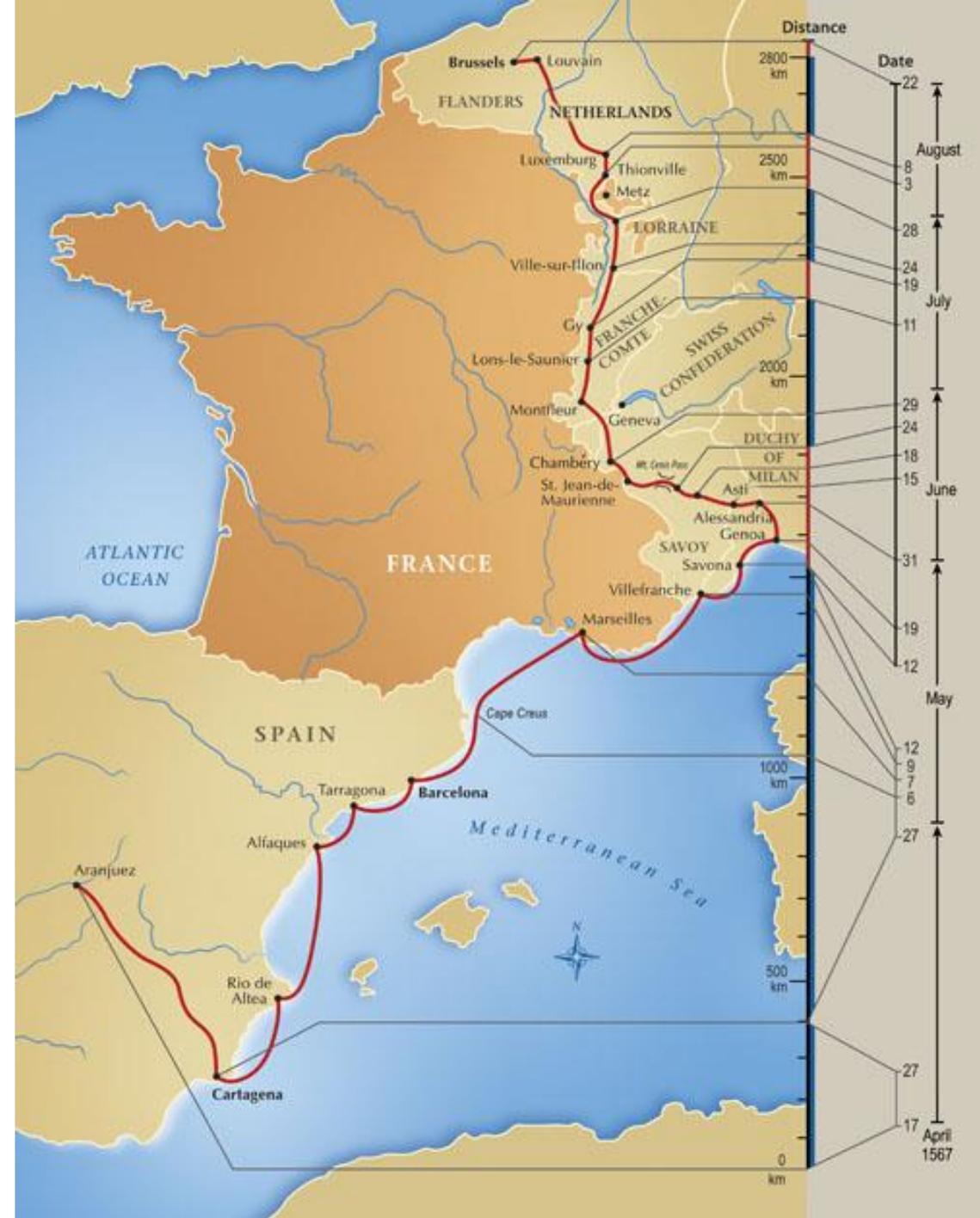


Causes of the Revolt

- Philip II was a devout Catholic - and Protestantism had been creeping into the Netherlands (the region as a whole was fairly religiously tolerant)
- Philip II moves harshly to crush all forms of Protestantism within the Netherlands using the Inquisition and military control
 - Even the Catholics revolt initially fearing a loss of their local control - and they also were more laid back Catholics than the Inquisition wanted...
 - Protestant Iconoclasts started busting up Catholic churches which Philip didn't like, it also concerned the Catholic Netherlanders...
- Philip sent the Duke of Alva and a large military contingent to regain control - Alva's attempt to do so was heavy handed and in many ways backfired

The Spanish Road

- The Duke of Alva's 1567 march to Brussels with his 10,000 troops along the "Spanish Road" shows some of the difficulty Spain had in taking control of the region by force
- The total trip is about 1,700 miles (roughly the distance from Seattle to Minneapolis)



The Revolt Grows

- 1568: The drive for independence is born
- William of Orange, Stadtholder of many Northern provinces, returns from exile and leads an army to take on the unpopular Spanish Alva's forces
- The war is brutal, entire cities are slaughtered by the thousands (by both sides) over the coming decades
- Spain was unable to win due in part to the many wars of Philip II and a lack of money despite the wealth coming in from the Americas
- The Dutch navy was also better than the Spanish so any attempt at resupplying the military had to be done over land through the heart of Europe



The Drive for Independence

- Two competing sides within the Netherlands emerge
 - The Northern regions (largely Protestant, the Union of Utrecht) under the leadership of William of Orange
 - The Southern regions (largely Catholic, the Union of Arras) who remain loyal to Philip II of Spain
- In 1581 the Northern Provinces passed the “Act of Abjuration” declaring their independence
- In 1584 William of Orange is assassinated following a bounty being placed on his head by Philip II, but the war continues (Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange takes over the leadership)

1584 to 1621

- The War continues on and off, Spain attempts new invasions, massacres ensue, counter attacks, naval attacks
- In 1609 Spain realizes the division of the region into two states is unavoidable, and they are broke
- Starting in 1609 a “truce” ensues and there is hope for a lasting peace (it lasts 12 Years)
- Both sides restock their treasuries, rebuild their forces and await renewed hostilities if no lasting peace can be found



The End and Independence for the Dutch Republic

- When hopes for a peace treaty broke down war returned
- From 1621 to 1648 the Dutch took commanding control of the seas defeating the Spanish decisively and ending them as a major sea power
- In the Netherlands the land war proved indecisive for both sides - both essentially retaining the same land they had in 1609
- By 1648 Spain, in the course of the settlement of the 30 Years War, was forced to recognize the independence of the Dutch republic
- Within 4 Years the Dutch would again be at war, but this time against England
- Post 1648 the Dutch enter their “Golden Age”

Celebration of the Peace of Munster - 1648



Europe in 1648

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AFTER THE TREATIES OF WESTPHALIA
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