

The Royal Marechaussee

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Abstract

The Royal Marechaussee (KMar) has undergone drastic changes during the past decades. It has developed into a modern police force with a military status executing a great variety of tasks in a flexible manner. In the year 2000 the KMar decided to establish its own initial education for its aspirant-officers and to entrust it to the RNLMA. The article discusses the reasons for this breach with the past and its consequences for the education and training.

Introduction

In 2000 for the first time in the history of the Royal Netherlands Military Academy (RNLMA) a cadet was admitted, who, after rounding off his education, was destined directly for the Service of the Royal Marechaussee (KMar). A year later the initial officer education for this Service was fully entrusted to the RNLMA. This was the first Service to send its aspirant officers to Breda since the arrival of the first Air Force cadets in 1939. What is the background of the KMar and why did it choose to set up its own initial officer education at the RNLMA?

The Royal Marechaussee: a police corps with military status

The Royal Marechaussee has had a long and rich tradition as a police corps. The term ‘marechaussee’ was first used in the Netherlands in the days of the Batavian Republic. In 1803 the decision was made to station a company of Marechaussee in the south of the country in order to protect the population from ‘robbery, plunder and other inconveniences’. Two years later it was reinforced with a company of *gendarmerie* in the fight against contraband and as a support for the police in case they were not able to provide adequate safety to the population. The stationing was later extended to the east of the country. Subsequently, in the era of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the French annexation (1806-1814), the Netherlands had a *gendarmerie* closely modelled on the French example.

The formal history of the KMar begins in 1814. After the fall of Napoleon the Netherlands regained independence under its monarch King William I. A new army was built up and a ‘Corps Marechaussee’, after the French model, was established in 1814. The Corps was tasked with maintaining law and order and guarding the safety of the border and the rural districts, especially in the southern part of the country. Its

strength was seven companies, totalling approximately 1,000 men. With the establishment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815 the Marechaussee was given the designation 'Royal'. It is not possible anymore to reconstruct the considerations which motivated the King to set up the KMar. Historically, the usual explanation for the necessity to establish the Corps lies in the special circumstances described above. From a political perspective it can be added that the King wanted a centrally controlled police corps as a counterbalance in the new decentralized union, which would allow him to make his influence felt if need be, in a literal and figurative sense. From the very first it was determined that the Minister of Defence was to control the corps. The authority over the corps lay with a number of (central) authorities, dependent on a particular assignment the KMar was given to carry out. The most prominent of these authorities was the Minister of Justice.

The secession of Belgium was an important event for the KMar at the time. As many men came from the Southern Netherlands, a drastic reorganization became unavoidable. Elements of the corps were actively involved in the 'Ten Days' Campaign against Belgium in August 1831, as scouts, protection units of logistic convoys and command posts, and as dispatch riders. Incidentally, in Belgium a *gendarmerie* corps was established, better known as the Rijkswacht in the Flemish part of the country, which at the beginning of the 21st century amalgamated with the (Federal) Police. After the Belgian revolt the strength of the Marechaussee crumbled to a mere 400-500 men, mainly stationed in the provinces of Zeeland, Noord-Brabant and Limburg. The reorganization of the KMar also had consequences for its embedding within the armed forces and the officer corps. From 1843 until 1909 the Inspector of the Cavalry exercised supervision over the corps and cavalry officers were regularly stationed there. For a long time the strength of the corps remained more or less stable, although a unit was stationed in the east and north of the country in 1889 and 1893, respectively. In the 19th century the KMar often provided military assistance when public order was disturbed so badly that the police could not cope anymore. This could be the case in all sorts of situations, such as village fairs, where alcohol was consumed profusely, or strikes and socialist riots. From the end of the 19th century the strength grew from 600 to well over 750, including twenty officers at most. In such a small organization opportunities for promotion were very slim indeed.

The officer education of the KMar from the 20th century onwards

The year 1909 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the KMar. The Service got its own Inspector, directly under the Ministers of War and Justice. On top of that, it got its own initial training institute for the rank and file and NCOs at Apeldoorn.

(1913) The officers, however, were still recruited from the armed forces, in particular the Royal Netherlands Army. In the past the transfer to the KMar had not been encumbered by any specific requirements; from 1933 onwards the officers needed a certificate 'of more extensive legal knowledge'. The transfer went via detachments to the KMar training centre and one of the divisions in the country. After obtaining his certificate for the legal course, the new officer was sent to the staff of the commander of a division. The functions requiring direct leadership were still the domain of the NCOs at the time. The number of brigades was large and every town of importance in the outer (border) districts had one, although their average strength was modest. The career of an officer often developed at the district staffs or at the next higher level of division staff. For the majority of the officers at the time the function of District Commander often was their end function. During the interbellum period the KMar went through turbulent times. After the establishment of the Police Corps, tasked with policing the field army, at the beginning of the 20th century, the thirties saw the beginning of a movement to amalgamate the KMar, the Police Corps and the then State *Gendarmerie* into one corps which was to be called State Police. This discussion led to the State Police Decree, in which both the KMar and the State *Gendarmerie* were merged into the State Police. Subsequently, there was the fundamental discussion on the question of the status of the State Police (i.e including the KMar): civil or military. The outbreak of World War II put an end to the discussion. Formally, everything stayed as it was: the KMar was a police corps with a military status.

The war in fact also meant the demise of the KMar training. The Marechaussee Officer Training School (SOOM) at Apeldoorn, intended to create a cadre for the post-war period was abolished as early as 1941 and police school at Schalkhaar, based on the German model, was not an acceptable alternative. The regular KMar officers became POWs in 1942, those who did not have this status, went underground or joined the



C. Smit - Slots, one of the first female officers of the Royal Marechaussee. She was originally a logistics officer, trained 1984-1988 at the RNLMA, and transferred to the KMar in 1992.

resistance. In fact the KMar lost its officer cadre, and all that was left were NSB members and a few reservists.

In 1945 the KMar had to rebuild quickly and virtually from scratch. The discussion on the police organization that had been ongoing since World War I was resumed with renewed enthusiasm after the war. The Police Corps, in the interbellum period tasked with policing the armed forces, disappeared and a State Police Corps was established to assume the police task in the rural areas. The Municipal Police retained the police tasks in the municipalities with a population of more than 25,000. As a result of these organizational adjustments the position of the KMar changed: contrary to what had been intended before the war, the corps was not a part of the State Police. The tasks given to the KMar encompassed the rendering of military assistance to the police, frontier guard duty and policing the armed forces. The officers of this renewed corps came from the former Police Corps and the Royal Netherlands Army. The majority of the remaining pre-war officers were taken up by the State and Municipal Police. As of December 1945, 38 officers with these backgrounds were stationed with the KMar. Together with the still available pre-1940 officers the total came to 50. In the same month six pupils from the Marechaussee Officer Training School (SOOM) joined the Corps.

After World War II the KMar continued its recruitment from the Services. From 1967 it became possible for Royal Netherlands Navy and Royal Netherlands Air Force officers to transfer to the KMar. Besides, since the 1980s NCOs were trained to become officers of special services. The corps wanted officers with troop experience and recruited through yearly campaigns in the *Landmachtmededelingen* (Army Notices), or later, *INFOOP* periodicals. RNLMA officers had already passed a selection and had personal experiences working 'with the troops', and the KMar was keen on having them. Besides, it was necessary for those stationed in the KMar units attached to the Army Corps, to know how the day-to-day army routine worked. Finally, the small number of KMar officers required, would make an own education inefficient.

In order to be transferred to the KMar the applicant had to submit a request, which, on acceptance, was followed by six-month retraining course at the KMar training centre (OCKMAR). It goes without saying that the emphasis of this course did not lie on initial officer training or education, but on the job-specific aspects of the work of a KMar officer. Apart from leadership aspects the officer functions within the KMar are also characterized by aspects regarding contents and expertise, relating largely to the formal qualifications KMar officers have to meet and which are laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure. The officer fulfilled and still fulfils an important role in the law of criminal procedure, because of his status as criminal investigator and assistant prosecutor. He also has special authorities within the context of maintaining public order. In the retraining course, therefore, the emphasis lies on political science, constitutional

law, administrative law, criminal law, road traffic law, legislation with regard to weapons, ammunition, drugs, disposal of the dead, etc. On top of that there is an extended practical training period in the general police services of the KMar, several working visits to KMar units, visits to courts of justice and a detachment to a KMar or police unit.

This approach worked very well for the KMar, within the framework of the tasks laid down in 1954: guarding the safety of members of the Royal House, policing the Netherlands Armed Forces, frontier guard duty and the monitoring of aliens, the rendering of assistance to civil police, assistance in bringing suspects to trial and executing criminal sentences and, guarding the Netherlands Bank. The distance between officers and the NCOs and men was great and although both groups called a disadvantage, a clear division between the domain of the officer (the higher management) on the one hand, and the domains of NCOs (middle management) and men (execution) on the other hand, was considered as workable. Incidentally, since 1978 the officer corps has taken in female officers.

A modern police corps

In the past decade the KMar has again changed greatly. It has evolved into a modern police corps with a military status, fulfilling a great variety of tasks in a flexible way. The most important task areas in 2003 are: law enforcement (including the military police task), maintaining legislation and rules and regulations with regard to aliens and rules and security. The KMar is still a corps under the authority of the Secretary of Defence and as such an instrument of the central authority. Within (and among) these task areas the central authority can set priorities, which makes the KMar an effective instrument for safeguarding the vital interests of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The KMar takes up a special position in the overall Dutch police and security organization. On the one hand, this special position is due to the range of duties specific to the KMar and the ensuing place in the spectrum of instruments at the disposal of the authorities, and on the other hand, it is legitimized by the way in which these tasks are executed. The main difference with other police organizations, such as the regional police force, National Police Services, and special investigation services (a.o. Fiscal Intelligence and Investigation Department) lies in the way in which this execution of professional police and security duties is realized on the basis of values and norms, principles and foundations closely related to its military status. Incidentally, the KMar as a police corps along military lines has European counterparts in such corps as the French *Gendarmerie*, the Italian *Carabinieri* and the Spanish *Guardia Civil*.

For the KMar the evolution of tasks obviously had organizational consequences. The number of KMar brigades has decreased considerably with a simultaneous increase of

personnel, which makes the present-day brigades complex, multi-disciplinary units, consisting of multiple departments. The command functions at brigade, and to a lesser extent, department level, have changed fundamentally in the process: of old the domain of the experienced expert, they have evolved into all-round management functions, although their successful fulfilment is still very much dependent on an affinity with the police job. As a consequence, these functions have shifted from the NCO to the officer domain.

The functions of brigade and department commander have hitherto been occupied by officers who have either transferred from the NCO ranks, or officer ranks of the other three Services. Although on an incidental basis KMar officers were educated at the RNLMA since 2000, there was no initial training until 2001. NCOs moving up to the officer ranks received a short, additional education and officers coming from the other Services still follow the retraining course, which lasts nine months, including a practical training period.

In 2000 it was decided to set up an initial KMar training, as an integral part of a new personnel policy. The arguments for this were founded on the changed function requirements, on the one hand, and the increased importance of an influx of young officers at the base of a pyramidal personnel structure, on the other. Once the decision to set up an initial officer education had been taken, the objectives of the education were defined. What functions are going to be fulfilled by the officers, what are the core competencies required for those functions? A choice was made to train the officers for the function of department commander, the most important competencies of which had already been described in the officer profile of the basic segment of the KMar personnel. Subsequently, an orientation was carried out into the way in which the required competencies could be developed. In doing this, a pragmatic approach was adopted: the numbers of aspirant officers would not be so great that the development and implementation of an initial officer education by the KMar itself would be efficient. That is why it was considered to what extent (combinations of) existing educational programmes and the institutions to teach them could cover the need for education. Needless to say, the embedding of the KMar within the Ministry of Defence from an organizational and control view played an important role. The eventual choice for the RNLMA was based on educational as well as organizational grounds.

The professional profile of the KMar officer encompasses a number of competencies that reflect his military status, which, as was described above, is the foundation not only for the KMar's organizational competencies, but also its unique position in the police and security organization. They give the organization its specific character, and every single one of them is a characteristic of the KMar serviceman/woman in general and the officer in particular. Although a number of KMar competencies are very similar to those

of police officers or managers of the Immigration and Naturalization Office, many others are typical for military officers. It concerns not only military competencies in a narrow sense, such as battlefield survival, but also in a broader sense, such as command and control and military (operational) tactics, that can be applied in police operations. The RNLMA education is the only one to offer the possibility to develop these specific competencies. As it was also possible there to develop the other competencies within existing and still-to-be-designed programmes, the choice for the RNLMA was easy.

In which way are these programmes realized in order to attain the objectives formulated on the basis of the professional profile? Although the development is not quite finished yet, the first contours begin to emerge. The KMar officer education has three streams: the four-year Bachelor course, the two-year course for academically educated candidates (cadets with a completed Higher Vocational or University education), and the course for NCOs retraining to become officers, which lasts up to one and a half years. All streams get off to the same start: cadets go through Basic Military Training (AMO), followed by Elementary Leadership Training (AKO) and finally Advanced Leadership Training (ALO). They partake in these phases together with Army and Air Force cadets, on the basis of a common syllabus. Their instructors are KMar NCOs, so that the specific KMar element can be brought in from the very beginning of their training. After six months of AMO/AKO/ALO the three streams differentiate.

The cadets following the Bachelor education go through the Joint Officer Education (GOO), in which they receive a programme of several basic modules of military sciences, management and public administration sciences, and technical sciences jointly with their Army and Air Force colleagues. After the GOO the KMar cadets follow the management and public administration Bachelor course. They differentiate within this programme and follow a so-called Minor in law and police sciences. Although the Bachelor and the Minor in it are still being developed, it is clear that the Minor will probably comprise such subjects as criminal law, constitutional and administrative law, law concerning aliens, military criminal and disciplinary law, administrative sciences, public administration, criminology and police and security studies. The Bachelor programme also encompasses a practical training period, during which the cadets get acquainted with the operational tasks of the KMar. At the moment there are still ongoing discussions on the draft programme with the client, the Commander in Chief of the KMar, and subsequently the Faculty of Military Sciences in formation will see to an efficient realization. On completion of the Bachelor course the cadets go through their Arms Specific Training (VTO). During this training, which takes place at the KMar National Training and Knowledge Centre (LOKKMar), in particular the function-related competencies, which constitute the professionalism of the KMar officer, is developed. VTO takes six months, after which the education is formally completed. At the moment

it is still being investigated whether there is a need for additional training, in particular in the area of criminal investigation, special duty police or alien affairs.

The academically educated cadets and those in the retraining programme follow the Introduction into Military Management (IMB) module and the Basic Officer Training (BOO) after having gone through the initial AMO/AKO/ALO sequence. IMB takes about six months and consists of three themes: armed forces and society, management and (peace) operations. During the first theme the KMar cadets follow a programme which is partly joined, partly specific. The latter explicitly deals with the build-up and embedding of the police and security organization and the position of the KMar in this. The management theme is followed together with the other cadets, after which the operations theme is KMar-specific again. It covers the task areas of the KMar and its history and it is completed with brigade simulation exercise. After the Basic Officer Training the academically educated cadets follow a post-academic programme. The cadets on the retraining course continue their education at the LOKKMar, where they take their Arms Specific Training (VTO). The academically educated cadets receive their VTO after the post-academic programme.

The KMar education at the RNLMA is not definite yet, at the moment. The first few years have shown that in many respects the RNLMA education is too military-technical or too military-operational for the KMar. There is hardly any link-up with work of the KMar organization and it will have to be developed step by step. In particular those cadets who have already served as NCOs notice this. It is the challenge for the KMar to win its place in the educational building, in which not only the KMar can do justice to its specific tasks, but where there is a mutual understanding and respect between Army, Air Force and KMar. As long as no choice is made to incorporate the KMar fully into the civilian police force, the co-habitation at an educational institute like the RNLMA has to have an added value for all parties concerned.