UIT DANKBAARHEID VOOR 50 JAAR VRIJHEID
JE MAINTIENDRAI
KONINKRIJK DER NEDERLANDEN
1945-1995

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Soestdijk Palace, September 1994

Fifty years ago the gradual liberation of the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies began, ushering in a period of joy and gratitude. While the joy was often tempered or obscured by memories of suffering undergone and loved ones lost, and feelings of uncertainty about the future, the gratitude remained. This sense of gratitude embraces all the young people, from every corner of the world, who left hearth and home to restore to millions of others the freedom of which they had been wrongfully deprived.

The war to achieve this end, which lasted nearly six years, cost the lives of many members of the liberating forces. Fortunately, however, many more survived, even if some of them are constantly reminded of the war by the effects of their wounds.

A group which includes representatives of the Dutch resistance and the wartime armed forces has found a way to express the gratitude which lives on to this day among many Dutch people. They plan to present a hand-painted commemorative plate to the organisations of veterans who helped to liberate the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies. Fifty years ago I was Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch armed forces. I have therefore been asked to present one of these plates to you together with this letter. It gives me great pleasure to comply with this request. I witnessed your bravery and know how well-deserved our gratitude is.

In conclusion I would like to extend my best wishes and warmest greetings to you all.

Bernhard

Prince of the Netherlands