

# Battle of Noordhorn (1581)

## briefing Dutch union army

This battle took place on 30 September 1581 just to the west of Noordhorn on a field that today is still called Norritsveld after the English commander of the Dutch army.

### *Prelude*

In 1580, the Dutch stadholder of Groningen, George van Lalaing, Count of Rennenberg, had shifted his allegiance from the Dutch to the Spanish side, also known as the treason of Rennenberg. It opened a new front to the Dutch Republic and forced it to dispatch forces to the north. In July 1581, however, Rennenberg died and was replaced by the Spaniard Francisco Verdugo. When he arrived in Groningen with reinforcements the situation changed once more. After pressure from the Frisians the Dutch finally send an army to the north. Verdugo positioned himself at Noordhorn and induced the Dutch into an attack.

### *Situation*

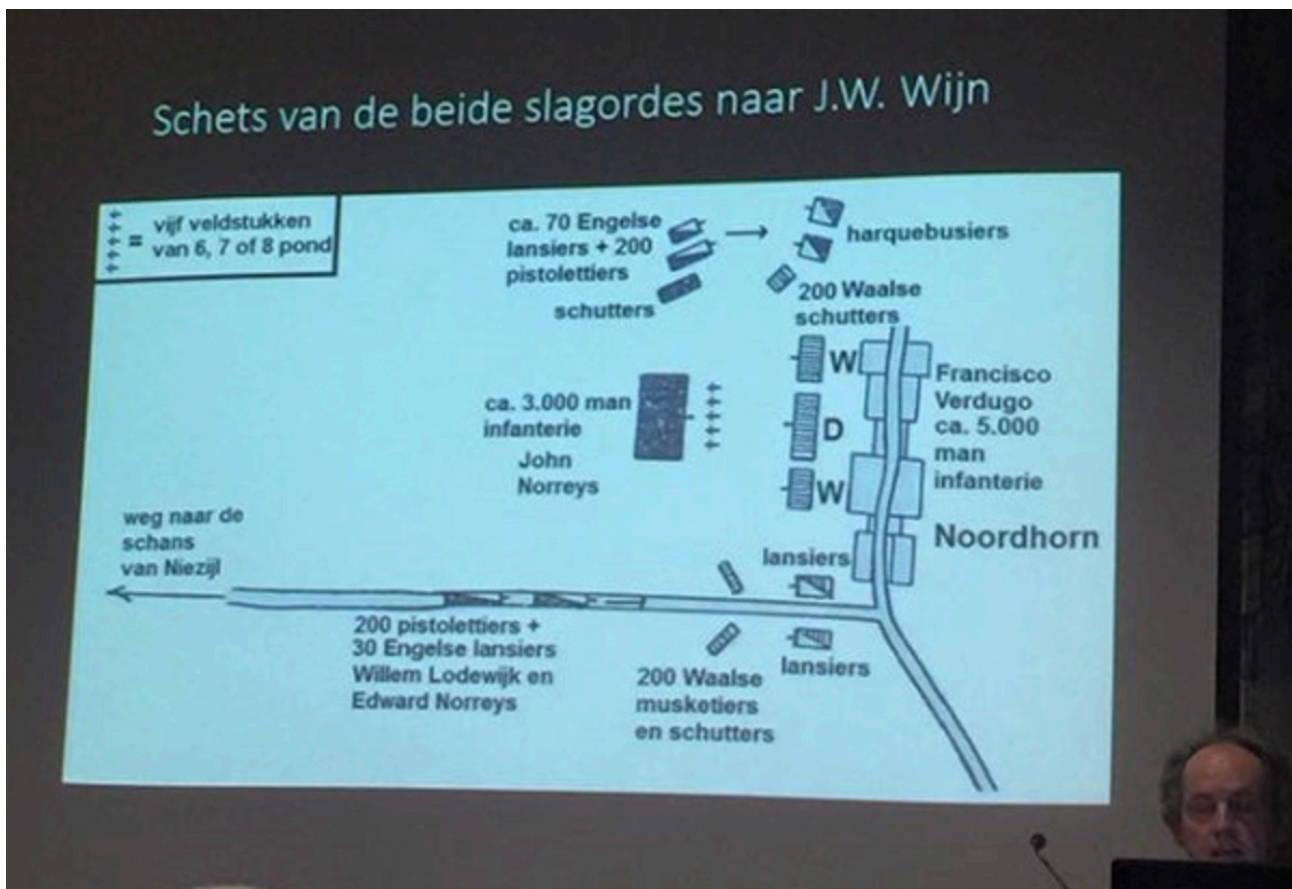
The ground in the north of the Netherlands is open and flat. Just a few metres of height differences characterise the mostly agricultural terrain. Today drainage is near perfect. For 1581 it is described as boggy and rough.



Noordhorn, Westerkwartier, Groningen, Nederland (53.26721 6.39105)

The Dutch army is headed by the Englishman John Norreys and included the stadholder of Friesland Willem Lodewijk van Nassau. It deployed to the west of Noordhorn and

consisted of mercenary units of many different backgrounds, being mostly English, Dutch, Frisian and German Landsknecht.



### Victory conditions

Defeat the Spanish army in order to advance on Groningen

## Army Control Dice: 7D6

The so-called union army was still very much in development and not on par with the Spanish. The great reforms of Maurits being still years ahead into the future. Still, starting in 1578, just 3 years before this battle, several officer ranks were abandoned, others created and the appointment of captains and above was laid into the hands of the commander in chief, i.e. Willem van Oranje, thus ensuring the selection of trustworthy people. Willem also reorganised the composition of the infantry by significantly increasing the number of pikemen.

### Stadhouder van Friesland (independent leader)

Commander: Willem Lodewijk van Nassau

Coup d'oeil: capable (4D6)

Special rule: Us Heit.

**Us Heit.** Being the stadholder of Friesland Willem Lodewijk is there better known as Us Heit (our Father). He ensured timely pay and was a strict disciplinarian. He was a nephew of Maurits and together with him the architect of the army reforms that would shape the State's army from 1592 onwards. Any mercenary unit under his command may forfeit the mercenary keyword.

### Bataille

Commander: John Norreys

Coup d'oeil: capable (4D6)

Special rules: n.a.

Unit	Size (men)	WEAPON	REMARKS
Demi-lances	70 (3 bases)	Lance, 3/4 plate armour, unarmored horses	1 to 3 ranks MERCENARY
Demi-lances	30 (2 bases)	Lance, 3/4 plate armour, unarmored horses	1 to 3 ranks MERCENARY
Reiters	200 (2x2 bases)	Pistol, 3/4 plate armour, unarmored horses	CARACOLE, CLOSE ORDER, MERCENARY Up to 10 ranks
Reiters	200 (2x2 bases)	Pistol, 3/4 plate armour, unarmored horses	CARACOLE, CLOSE ORDER, MERCENARY Up to 10 ranks
Mercenary pikemen	750 (2 blocks)	Pike, frontrank 3/4 plate armour	CUADRO DE GENTE (±30x30) MERCENARY

## Bataille

Commander: John Norreys

Coup d'oeil: capable (4D6)

Special rules: n.a.

Unit	Size (men)	WEAPON	REMARKS
Mercenary shot	500 (3 bases)	Arquebus	6 to 8 ranks MERCENARY
Mercenary shot	500 (3 bases)	Arquebus	6 to 8 ranks MERCENARY
Frisian pikemen	750 (2 blocks)	Pike, frontrank 3/4 plate armour	CUADRO DE GENTE (±30x30)
Frisian shot	500 (3 bases)	Arquebus	6 to 8 ranks
Artillery	5 (1 base)	Field guns	Immobile for the battle