



# Veterans' Policy

## Fact Sheet

### **Policy objectives**

The first document on veterans, entitled “Coherent Care for Veterans”, was published in the Netherlands in 1990. The document cited two central policy objectives:

- promoting and increasing public recognition of veterans;
- minimising the negative (health) consequences of war or deployment experiences.

In producing that document, the government recognised in 1990 that it had failed as far as recognising veterans and providing after-care for them was concerned and that it was partly responsible for the health and welfare of veterans.

Today's veterans' policy is based on the Veterans Act (2012) and the Veterans Decree (2014). The original objectives of the policy remain in place.

### **Definition and numbers**

Under the Veterans Act, a veteran is “the serviceman or servicewoman, former serviceman or servicewoman, or former conscript of the Netherlands Armed Forces, or the Royal Netherlands Indies Army, as well as any former conscripted members of the Merchant Navy who served the Kingdom of the Netherlands in time of war or who took part in a mission to maintain or promote the international rule of law insofar as that mission was designated by order of Our Minister.” Missions mean in particular the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, NATO and the European Union.

The Netherlands has four main groups of veterans. The size of the groups is evolving roughly as follows:

	Dutch service personnel deployed	Number of veterans in 1990	Number of veterans in 2005	Number of veterans in 2010	Number of veterans in 2014
<b>WW II 1940-1945</b>	380,000	135,000	16,500	5,000	3,500
<b>Dutch East Indies 1945-1950</b>	170,000	120,000	60,000	35,000	26,500
<b>New Guinea 1950-1962</b>	30,000	27,000	20,000	15,000	13,000
<b>Peacekeeping operations 1945-2014</b>	90,000	11,000	49,500	56,000	82,000
<b>Total</b>	670,000	293,000	146,000	111,000	125,000

## Our partners

Various parties are involved in formulating and implementing veterans' policy. Together, they are helping to raise public recognition and appreciation and to provide veterans with after-care. The principal parties are:

- the Ministry of Defence which determines and finances the policy and implements various policy initiatives;
- the *Stichting het Veteraneninstituut (Vi)* [Veterans' Institute Foundation] which implements a significant part of veterans' policy on behalf of the ministry;
- the *Landelijk Zorgsysteem voor Veteranen (LZV)* [National Care System for Veterans], which performs a pivotal function in the area of care for veterans;
- the *Stichting Veteranen Platform* [Veterans' Platform Foundation] which, as an umbrella organisation made up of more than forty veterans' organisations and trade unions, looks after veterans' interests;
- the *Stichting Nederlandse Veteranendag (NLVD)* [Netherlands Veterans' Day Foundation] which organises the Netherlands Veterans' Day every year and promotes public appreciation for veterans.

## Main elements of policy implementation

### Recognition and appreciation

The Ministry of Defence, the *NLVD* and the *Vi* - alongside veterans' organisations - aim to increase awareness of war and deployment experiences within society and to raise public recognition of and appreciation for veterans. Some of the methods they use to achieve this include:

- organising and helping to organise the Netherlands Veterans' Day which, since 2005, has taken place annually on the last Saturday of June;
- organising veterans' days (held by branches of the armed forces) and providing reunion facilities;

- helping to organise local and regional veterans' days;
- granting decorations, including the Veterans' Commemorative Badge;
- issuing the veterans' card and publishing Checkpoint, the veterans' magazine;
- carrying out and promoting research;
- providing information and disseminating knowledge to, among others, the media and schoolchildren.

The *Vi* in Doorn plays a key role in the area of public appreciation. In 2014, the *Vi* has more than 60,000 veterans (more than three-quarters of all retired veterans) holding a veterans' card on file. These veterans' card holders can take advantage of the benefits attached to that pass.

#### **Care and after-care**

Veterans can experience adjustment problems or negative health consequences resulting from their war or deployment experiences while on active duty at any time. Some will have symptoms of a psychological or psychosocial nature. It is mainly veterans with serious and/or long-term coping problems or other health complaints who benefit from professional help. Veterans in active service can then rely on the care services provided by the Ministry of Defence. At the heart of the care system for retired veterans are:

- The *Vi's Veteranenloket* [Veterans' Office] within which various organisations collaborate. This office is the first point of contact for veterans, their relations and other people with direct involvement, such as referrers and practitioners. The Veterans' Office can be consulted for information and the provision of services. The Office is the access and referral point for counselling, psychological help and material help for veterans.
- The National Care System for Veterans (*LZV*). The National Care System for Veterans is a partnership of nine civilian and three military care institutions. The services provided range from spiritual counselling, social work, readily accessible support to more specialised assistance.
- The General Pension Fund for Public Employees which, on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, provides casualties of war or military service with material services such as benefits, invalidity pensions and benefits in kind.

The *Raad voor civiel-militair Zorg en Onderzoek (RZO)* [Civil-Military Care and Research Council] has been monitoring the quality of veterans' care since 2007. It also promotes collaboration between the care partners and gives advice on scientific research into deployment-related conditions.

The Ministry of Defence's *Veteranen Registratie Systeem (VRS)* [Veterans' Registration System], in which all veterans are recorded, ensures that veterans can be contacted at any time, for example, to provide them with information or for research purposes.

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## **Further information**

This fact sheet provides general information. For further information about the veterans' policy, go to the following websites: [www.mindef.nl](http://www.mindef.nl), [www.veteraneninstituut.nl](http://www.veteraneninstituut.nl), [www.veteranenloket.nl](http://www.veteranenloket.nl), [www.veteranendag.nl](http://www.veteranendag.nl) and [www.lzv-groep.nl](http://www.lzv-groep.nl). You may also contact us by telephone (088 334 00 50) or by email ([info@veteraneninstituut.nl](mailto:info@veteraneninstituut.nl)).

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