



‘Veteraan in de Klas’

[Veteran in the Classroom]

Fact Sheet

Introduction

The educational programme ‘Veteran in the Classroom’ is part of a broader educational programme of the National Veterans’ Day Committee. The Veterans’ Institute has been running this programme since 2005, for a long time under the name ‘Verhalen van Veteranen’ [Veterans’ Tales]. Veterans of various wars and peacekeeping missions visit schools as guest speakers and discuss their deployment and what it means to be a veteran with pupils. Topics which are also relevant to other (young) citizens arise during those discussions. It is history teaching in the flesh, as well as interactive teaching and learning, and draws its strength from the personal accounts of military experiences and their consequences. Pupils in the 10-18 year age group are the key target group of the educational programme, although students in higher education or at university are also part of that group.

Part of the veterans’ policy

‘Veteran in the Classroom’ is perfectly in line with one of the objectives of the veterans’ policy, namely to promote the visibility of and appreciation for veterans within society by raising the public’s awareness of war and deployment experiences. To emphasise the link between veterans and young people, including schoolchildren, and between the Netherlands Veterans’ Day and the educational project, fifty pupils from the educational project are special guests at the annual Netherlands Veterans’ Day. Their presence and role in the Ridderzaal and at the Binnenhof generate numerous positive responses. In addition, eight pupils are involved every year in the medal parade at the Binnenhof.

Educational material

The veteran's personal account has a central place within the 'Veteran in the Classroom' educational programme. However, since 2005 we have also been working on educational material to prepare for or support guest talks. With the support of the Veterans' Institute, the *Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling* [Curriculum Development Foundation] has developed a guide for schools and teachers. This *Educational Arsenal* contains background information, teaching material and formats the teacher can use to improve the educational return of the veteran's visit.

In 2010, under the auspices of the National Netherlands Veterans' Day Committee, the richly illustrated comprehensive book *Oorlogen en vredesmissies. Ervaringen van Nederlandse veteranen* [Wars and Peacekeeping Missions. Experiences of Dutch Veterans] was published. Participating schools are provided with this book. Schools ordering the complete teaching package also receive access to the interactive website www.watzoujijbeslissen.nl, which pupils can use to go through four scenarios involving dilemmas for service personnel and veterans on deployment. All pupils also receive the '10 veterans, 10 stories' comic brought out by the National Veterans' Day Committee in October 2014.



Guest speakers

As at the end of 2014, roughly 300 veterans have registered as guest speakers. About 40 of them are also regional coordinators; they arrange bookings at schools. The guest speakers will have served in one of the four branches of the armed services. They are veterans, varying widely in age, who have served during various wars or peacekeeping missions, from the Second World War to recent missions, such as the one in Afghanistan. The veterans contribute voluntarily to 'Veterans in the Classroom', and are motivated by a wish to:

- pass on (living) history;
- share war and deployment experiences and talk about their significance;
- help the public realise that peace and security had and have a price.

Since 2009, veterans who have registered as guest speakers receive training encompassing teaching methods, how to structure a guest talk, the children's states of development stages and the structure of today's education before their first school visit. At return sessions, an assessment takes place so as to improve the quality of the guest talks.

Results

Table: Number of school visits

School year	Number of guest appearances	Pupils reached	Of which outside the school context
2010-2011	330	8,268	525
2011-2012	470	11,702	2,314
2012-2013	570	14,267	3,303
2013-2014	1,015	23,371	5,227

Interest in the 'Veteran in the Classroom' educational programme has increased sharply in recent years. The rising number of school visits means ever more pupils are being reached: from 2,635 pupils in the 2008-2009 school year to more than 23,000 in the 2013-2014 school year. The ambition is to reach no fewer than 70,000 pupils in the 2016-2017 school year.

Roughly 65% of the school visits took place at primary school level (years 7 and 8) and the other visits were to secondary schools or higher education establishments. For some years now, guest talks have also been given regularly at places other than schools, such as in a museum or at a festival site. In addition to the target group of pupils, the educational programme is also reaching the target audience at Rotary Clubs, women's associations, churches, etc.

The continuous assessment of 'Veteran in the Classroom' shows that schools and pupils value the guest talks very highly. It is clear that they are meeting a need. Pupils are learning much from them, about war and peace, recent (military) history and about what it means to be deployed and to be a veteran. The programme is also helping schools to meet the statutory requirement (since 2006) to provide civic education lessons.

Further information

This fact sheet provides general information. For further information on the 'Veteran in the Classroom' educational programme, go to the website www.veteraneninstituut.nl and www.veteranendag.nl. The Veterans' Institute educational team can also be contacted on 088-334 00 50 (tel. no) or at educatie@veteraneninstituut.nl (email).

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