

### **March 12, 2020**

#### **New measures against the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus)**

Dear colleague,

Following the Cabinet's consultation on the approach to COVID-19 this afternoon, it was decided tonight in the Defense Policy Team that Defense employees have new measures against the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus). For example, events with more than 100 people are canceled. In addition, Defense employees will work from home as much as possible from Monday.

The commanders and supervisors are making new schedules as soon as possible to ensure the continuity of the Defense business. Before Sunday March 15, you will receive more information about the consequences of the measures for your activities through your supervisor / commander.

What should I do?

Do you have (mild) complaints (nose cold, cough, sore throat or fever)?

- Stay at home and limit social contacts and report it to your manager.
- Only call your (military) doctor if your symptoms worsen.

These measures are valid until March 31, 2020.

We understand that these measures may cause inconvenience, but they help limit further spread of the virus.

Sincerely,

Gea van Craaikamp  
Secretary General

Lieutenant Admiral Rob Bauer  
Commander of the Armed Forces

### **March 18, 2020**

#### **Medical care for military personnel adapted.**

The virus COVID-19 also has an impact on the efforts of the Defense Healthcare Organization. That is why medical care for soldiers has been adjusted. Naturally, this is done in a responsible manner. For which care can military personnel go to Defense?

#### **Central Military Hospital (CMH).**

The Central Military Hospital only deals with emergency and semi-emergency cases. COVID-19 patients are not (for the time being) cared for here. Patients with lung complaints receive a referral to local hospitals. All planned care has been canceled / postponed. Policy visit is converted into a telephone consultation or postponed. There is close contact with referrers about the degree of urgency.

#### **Defense Dental Service (DTD).**

The dental service calls patients to discuss the need for scheduled treatment. New agreements are only made for emergency complaints such as trauma, pain, swelling and broken / loose elements. The treatments (dental fit) for military personnel who are deployed for a short period of time will continue as normal.

This also applies to military doctors, pilots, divers and personnel from the explosive ordnance disposal service.

(Suspected) COVID-19 patients should not come to regular practice. They receive necessary dental care under responsible conditions at a location to be determined.

#### **Military Mental Health Care (MGGZ).**

Primarily, the MGGZ remains available 24/7 and the clinics are open at regular times. Contact with clients is limited as much as possible for individual treatments. The MGGZ therefore converts planned appointments into telephone appointments as much as possible. Clients will be notified of this. Group sessions will not continue until further notice. The MGGZ sends clients information and it is examined which steps they can take themselves. Part-time treatments continue in an adapted form. In principle, lessons and training by the MGGZ are canceled.

#### **Military Rehabilitation Center (MRC).**

The MRC temporarily stops the treatment of rehabilitation patients without acute medical need. Rehabilitators may receive a maximum of 1 visitor at a time in the coming period. Visitors are not allowed to eat in the company restaurant for the time being. Rehabilitators and visitors without corona symptoms / complaints are welcome, but the MRC asks to limit the visit as much as possible. Visiting times remain unchanged.

#### **Obligated.**

Soldiers are obliged to contact their military doctor and to use the care within Defense. Especially now that the pressure on civil healthcare is increasing.

#### **March 24, 2020.**

In Lithuania, a Dutch soldier is infected with the coronavirus. He has been placed in isolation, says Defense Minister Ank Bijleveld.

About 270 Dutch military personnel are deployed in the Baltic state. According to a spokesman for the ministry, local measures have been taken to prevent further spread. A number of other military personnel have also been quarantined. The Dutchman is the first of the multinational force because it is infected with the virus.

The soldiers are stationed in Rukla and are under German command. They are part of an advanced NATO force. Additional NATO military personnel are also stationed in Estonia, Latvia and Poland. This is intended to reassure these countries with a view to threats from Russia.

#### **Defense gives thousands of kilos of food to food banks.**

Defense gives food to 3 distribution centers of the food bank. It concerns 35 pallets including meat, meat products, dairy products, vegetables, fruit, butter and sauces. Soldiers have delivered the goods in Arnhem, Groningen and Tilburg. It is a first quantity.

The pallets were stored at the military complex in Bathmen near Deventer. The estimated more than 10,000 kilos of food was intended for the participating troops in a target practice in Bergen Hohne, Germany. It has been canceled to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The stock of food is therefore over. Defense decided to donate them to the food bank. More exercises have been canceled, such as jungle training in Belize. The food that was intended for the participating military personnel also goes to the food bank. A spokesperson said that "the food is very welcome in these bizarre times."

**March 26, 2020****Defense is considering deployment of reserve personnel because of COVID-19.**

While COVID-19 is gripping the world, this may lead to even more demand for reservists. The reservist base already passed 6,000 last month. They also work more hours per person on average. This is due to the path taken to an adaptive armed forces. Collaboration with other organizations plays an important role in this. Reservists are now deployed in an increasing number of areas and at all levels.

Reservists make the armed forces more flexible and provide more capacity in terms of mass and knowledge. In addition, they form an important bridge to civil society. Defense wants to facilitate the growth of the number of reservists and their deployment. That is why 100 measures have been identified. Most are complicated, but a number of things have already (largely) been arranged. Those are:

- Recruiting reservists from VeVA students who do not want to be professional soldiers.
- A VMBO diploma is sufficient to apply to the National Reserve Corps.
- The selection and inspection process for reservists is the same as for a professional soldier. Any reservist without a military background will receive initial military training. The Marechaussee and the Air Force are expected to offer these jointly after the summer.
- Automating the payout without apple lists is already a reality for reservists who work according to a fixed schedule. This is a first step in digitizing / automating all apple lists.
- Employers have examined what could be improved in cooperation with Defense. It produced an initial report.
- The conscription letter to all 17-year-olds includes information about opportunities as a reservist.
- There is a statement with which reservists can thank their civilian employer for the possibilities of also working as a reservist in the armed forces.
- The civil servants collective bargaining agreement contains a passage about reservists. They receive extra leave for effort and/or exercise and supplement their wages if they earn more as civil servants than as military personnel. Discussions have also started with other employers.
- Maternity and parental leave are also available to reservists.
- The COVID-19 measures have consequences for reservists. In the context of good employment practices, the Defense has made provisions about the current agreements on deployment (including payment), Emergency Fund Bridging Employment and alternative operational deployment.

**March 30, 2020****Defense makes extra respiratory equipment available for hospitals.**

Defense makes another 25 respirators available to hospitals throughout the Netherlands. Last week, Defense also delivered 40. These 25 devices were made ready for use last week by specialists from Dräger in Zoetermeer. Trucks and a single Amrook army pickup take the devices to the hospitals. They use these to ventilate critically ill corona patients in their intensive care units. Defense makes the funds available at the request of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Defense Minister Ank Bijleveld-Schouten said earlier that the Netherlands can call on the military organization to help in the fight against corona. "Of course we do what is possible to assist the Dutch population where possible."

In addition to respiratory equipment, the Defense also supplies several planners. They assist hospitals and safety regions with, among other things, the redistribution of patients. Military nurses have also been deployed to support the civilian care sector.

### **Military Crisis Action Team 24/7 for assistance in the Netherlands**

Then the Defense will make respiratory and X-ray machines available for various hospitals. And then again, the armed forces ensure that a nursery receives bunk beds and mattresses. As a result, parents with a vital profession can also work at night without having to worry about their kiddies staying in shelters.

"Simple to organize and we take away major concerns", explains Air Force Colonel Peter Tankink. He is head of the Crisis Action Team (CAT) of the Ministry of Defense. This determines whether, where and when military personnel and equipment are deployed in the fight against the corona virus.

Military control.

The requests granted are not just beds, mattresses and respirators. Military personnel are also working here and there, for example in storage areas for medicines. They are now guarded by infantrymen. Military planners work for medical institutions. Through military management, they ensure that corona patients are distributed among hospitals where there are still places in intensive care.

It is up to the Crisis Action Team (CAT) to coordinate requests for help and determine whether or not help is provided. Tankink: "We use 3 principles in this consideration: we can, can and may help." Want to know why something is sometimes not possible? Read more about how things are going at CAT in the Defense newspaper.

The crisis center is located in the Ministry of Defense in The Hague and operates 24/7. Civil authorities such as hospitals, GGDs and Safety regions can submit a request for assistance to the National Operational Coordination Center (LOCC). There, questions or offers are forwarded to the CAT of Defense, among others.

### **April 2, 2020**

#### **Support of health care system in the Netherlands.**

Last weekend, Defense sent six doctors and twelve nurses to Gelderse Vallei in Ede, the first hospital in the Netherlands where military medical personnel were deployed during the corona crisis. The eighteen soldiers received internal training on Monday.

On Tuesday they went to work in the intensive care and emergency departments.

Gelderse Vallei asked for military aid after a drastic increase in the number of IC beds. Almost a hundred

This week, a total of almost a hundred nurses and doctors of Defense started working in hospitals. Due to the corona crisis, there was a shortage of personnel in the intensive care units there. It was previously announced that the military supplies 65 respirators to hospitals. The ten military doctors and 85 nurses are now strengthening ranks in nine hospitals.

#### **Deployment of MOD Medical facilities.**

Defense is examining whether naval ships with extensive medical facilities can be deployed. This includes looking at efforts in the Caribbean. Defense medical planners have been working in hospitals in Brabant for some time. There they help redistribute patients among other hospitals elsewhere in the Netherlands. Planners also support the Ministry of Health in tackling the corona crisis.

**Submarine trip canceled.**

Submarine Zr.Ms. Dolphin will end her trip near Scotland at the end of this week. A number of the 58 crew members have or had the corona virus. Fifteen military personnel with mild influenza symptoms were tested on March 29 to assess whether they had produced antibodies as a result of the virus. This turned out to be the case with eight of them. The submarine sails from Scotland to Den Helder and this week will come to an abrupt end. That is two weeks earlier than assumed. The crew quarantines to prevent further contamination.

**April 3, 2020****130 military musicians have recorded a military march from home.**

They support emergency services and care providers, who put their best foot forward during the corona crisis. The musical soldiers each took their own part of the march at home. The result can be seen in a music clip. [Military March for Home workers](#)

The clip of the 130 military musicians provides images that are recognizable for every home worker. For example, one of the musicians is flanked by her 6-month-old baby and another by homework children. "In this way we raise our thumbs up to everyone who is committed to fighting the corona crisis," explains Ron Geurts, one of the driving forces behind the initiative.

**Soldiers help coordination center for corona care.**

Ernst Kuipers, recently chairman of the quickly established national coordination center for corona care, received help from military personnel this week. They watched how the coordination center works and intervened if something went wrong during the process. The military served during missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and are therefore used to act quickly in crisis situations.

Kuipers must ensure that the Netherlands has enough IC capacity to accommodate each patient, if necessary on the other side of the Netherlands.

"We looked very closely at how Defense does this when they are on a mission," Kuipers said in an interview with Nu.nl. "Strangely enough at the moment the same comparison. Defense has helped us a lot with how we should do it." In his own words, he now has a good grip on the situation from the national coordination center.

**Zr. Mr. Dolphin back in Den Helder.**

The submarine Zr.Mr. Dolfijn returned this Friday in Den Helder. Defense aborted a submarine exercise near Scotland this week because a number of crew members had tested positive for the corona virus. The exercise would actually take two more weeks. The 58-strong crew is now quarantined.

**Koninklijke Marechaussee stops 50 people.**

Since an entry ban came into force on March 19 due to the corona crisis, the KMar has refused 50 foreigners to enter the Netherlands, De Telegraaf reports today. Of these, 37 were not allowed to enter the country on the basis of the entry ban.

Thirteen people were refused for other reasons, for example because they did not have a passport or money to stay in our country. Most passengers were stopped at Schiphol, followed by three people who came off the ferry in IJmuiden, two at Eindhoven Airport and one in Eemshaven.

**April 6, 2020****Support Caribbean islands of the Netherlands.**

On Sunday morning, a C-17 transport aircraft loaded by military personnel with relief supplies and equipment flew from Eindhoven Air Base to St. Maarten. These relief supplies are intended to treat corona patients in the Caribbean. Among other things, a partly mobile hospital with 6 intensive care places has been transported to St. Maarten.

On board the C-17 was also equipment to realize 6 extra intensive care beds in the hospital of St. Maarten. These beds are also intended for patients from all islands of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. The Netherlands also supplied protective equipment for doctors and nursing staff, medicines for corona patients and medical devices with the transport device.

**Veterans Day off the track.**

The Dutch Veterans Day in The Hague, scheduled for June 27, 2020, has been canceled. The Executive Committee of the National Veterans Day Committee made that decision last week because of the corona crisis. The program of Veterans Day included a meeting at the Malieveld, the parade for the king, the medal ceremony at the Binnenhof, the opening ceremony in the Ridderzaal and the so-called fly-past. The campaign team is now busy developing an alternative program, which will be finalized on April 15.

**Defense helps police with cardholders.**

The Defense organization printed 500 cardholders for the police within 24 hours in the past week. This was done using 3D printing. The police can click the 3d-printed card holders on the baton and thus check people's IDs at a distance of 1.5 meters. At the request of the National Police Staff, Defense has made cardholders for police forces throughout the Netherlands. A collaboration between the Defense organization and the Northern Netherlands Police Unit ultimately resulted in a solution for being able to check identity documents at an appropriate distance. These can now be slid into the holder and checked with gloves on.

**Substantial financial government measures.**

Substantial government financial measures came into effect last week to safeguard the employment and income of as many workers as possible during the corona crisis. The rapid realization of this is partly due to the efforts of the FNV, the largest union umbrella organization in the Netherlands, to which the AFMP is also affiliated.

Under the leadership of chairman Han Busker - in the above photo from the pre-corona era shaking hands with Minister Koolmees of Social Affairs and Employment - the FNV has put great pressure on the cabinet in recent weeks to quickly come up with a socio-economic support package. There is also plenty of advocacy for the necessary provisions to ensure that vital occupations (continue to) work as safely and healthily as possible during the corona crisis.

These are two socio-economic support measures that have come about thanks to the FNV:

- Temporary Emergency Measure Bridging for Work Retention (NOW)  
If an employer intends to make at least 20 percent less turnover, he can apply to the UWV for a "salary contribution" for three months. The amount depends on the expected loss of turnover and amounts to a maximum of 90 percent of the wage bill. As long as an employer receives money from this scheme, an employee cannot be fired and full wages are paid. You do not surrender unemployment rights.

- Financial support for self-employed persons for three months  
Self-employed persons can apply for support in the form of an additional benefit for subsistence and / or working capital. The living allowance supplements their income to the social minimum. Government loans can be taken out to solve liquidity problems.

### **April 7, 2020**

#### **Extra support of health care system in the Netherlands.**

Even more military care providers help in various Dutch hospitals. This number has been expanded from 90 to 130. The Ministry of Defense is also deploying 15 additional doctors. The caregivers are working in the Rijnstate Hospital in Arnhem, the Red Cross Hospital in Beverwijk, the Medisch Spectrum Twente, HMC Haaglanden, the Reinier de Graaf Gasthuis in Delft and the Noordwest Hospital Group in Alkmaar.

The armed forces also supply 75 camp beds to childcare in Assen. That is necessary. The number of children who are in 24-hour care due to the home situation has increased. That is why a number of additional reception locations have been created. Slingerland Hospital in Doetinchem has received four anesthesia machines from the Ministry of Defense.

#### **35 soldiers returned from Iraq.**

About 35 soldiers returned from Iraq on Saturday morning. There they took part in a training mission, which has since been shut down due to the corona virus. Defense Minister Bijleveld recently announced that some of the Dutch military would temporarily return to foreign missions. The soldiers were brought back with a C-130 Hercules from the Air Force. At the end of last month, some forty soldiers from northwestern Afghanistan had already returned. About 130 soldiers have remained there, because the activities are partly continuing. There are also a few Dutchmen in Kabul, just like in Jerusalem. The four Dutchmen in Burkina Faso, who work for a suspended American training mission, have returned.

### **April 8, 2020**

#### **Doctors Central Military Hospital call on patients not to stay away**

Patients have stayed away from hospitals since the COVID-19 crisis, as is the case with the Central Military Hospital (CMH). Doctors urgently call on the military that they would logically expect. Go to the hospital with, for example, chest pain, appendicitis, gallstones / kidney stones or other complaints.

Doctors are concerned about the absence of patients and emphasize that the CMH for emergency and semi-emergency is simply open. The primary health care company (EGB) in the health centers in military locations is also open. Work is performed safely in the medical circuit. There is no reason to stay away.