



Commemorative Badge for the Wounded

Fact Sheet

Institution

In 1990, the first veterans' policy document 'Coherent care for veterans' was published. It considered, among other things, that all military personnel and veterans suffering physical injury or psychological damage during their deployment in time of war or similar situations deserve a special mark of recognition.

On 11 October 1990, the then Minister of Defence, A.L. ter Beek, implemented this policy intention with the institution of the Commemorative Badge for the Wounded (*DIG*). Veterans believing they were eligible for a Commemorative Badge for the Wounded could apply to the Commemorative Badge for the Wounded Committee (*CODIG*), which was set up on 30 January 1991. That committee's task was to assess applications and advise the Minister on whether or not to award the commemorative badge.

Criteria

The committee set the following award criteria:

- the person must have been wounded and/or have a physical injury or comparable condition;
- the incident must have taken place whilst on active duty as a serviceman or servicewoman or member of the Merchant Navy;
- he or she must have been wounded in officially recognised war circumstances or similar situations;
- the entitled party must be alive at the time of notification.

The committee also determined that the nature and severity of the injury and the circumstances in which it occurred must be included in the assessment. This requirement meant, for example, that accidents in the line of duty were usually disregarded. A further requirement was that a physical injury could only be assessed as sufficiently serious if medical intervention and/or hospitalisation had taken place. The guideline set for a physical injury was that a medical certificate must be produced in evidence or that PTSD resulting in at least 10% invalidity must be established subsequently.

Commemorative badges granted between 1991 and 2008

The committee carried out its activities officially until 1 January 1994. During that period, 3,589 files were dealt with, resulting in 3,097 commemorative badges being granted (86%) and 492 applications rejected (14%). Although precise details are lacking, it is clear that until 1994 the vast majority of the commemorative badges (about 90%) were granted for physical injuries.

The *CODIG* ceased to exist in 1994. However, some committee members were willing, assisted by a medical adviser and the former Decorations' Section of the Ministry of Defence, to assess applications received from veterans and provide the Minister of Defence with recommendations. Between 2005 and 2008 that task was taken over by an advisory committee attached to the Veterans' Institute. Since July 2008, all applications - i.e. from veterans and also from service personnel in active service - have been dealt with by the Central Commemorative Badge for the Wounded Advisory Committee (*CADIG*), of which, among others, representatives of the Chief of the Netherlands Defence Staff and the four operational commands, military doctors, a military historian and the director of the Veterans' Institute are members.

In the period between 1994 and 2014, 2,327 applications from veterans were dealt with, resulting in 1,725 commemorative badges being granted (74%) and 602 rejections (26%). It should be noted here that since 2008 that percentage has risen to over 30%, partly as a result of unfamiliarity with the criteria on the part of applicants and partly owing to *CADIG*'s strict application of the criteria.

The number of commemorative badges granted on psychological grounds fluctuates during that period from 47% (1994-2000) to 80% (2001-2008) and to 68% (2009-2014). The peacekeeping operations' share has risen considerably, from 4% (1994-2000), via 49% (1994-2000) to 82% (2009-2014). The vast majority (over 80%) of all commemorative badges (since 1991) have been awarded to veterans (retired and in active service) of the Royal Netherlands Army.

A noteworthy point is that in 1992 a Commemorative Badge for the Wounded was granted to four marines who were wounded during their involvement in ending the De Punt hijacking (1977), the hostage-taking at Bovensmilde (1977) or Assen (1978). At that time, that deployment was not yet regarded as comparable with war circumstances and did not confer veterans' status on those involved. That status was granted later (2014) to former service personnel deployed at De Punt and Bovensmilde in 1977. Commemorative badges were granted again for deployment at De Punt in 2008 (1), 2010 (2) and 2013 (1).

DIG granted between 1991 and 2014

	1991-1994	1994-2000	2001-2008	2009-2014	Total
Physical injury		380 (50%)	89 (16%)	114 (28%)	
Psychological damage		361 (47%)	452 (80%)	269 (68%)	
A combination of the two		23 (3%)	22 (4%)	15 (4%)	
Total	3097	764	563	398	4,822
Second World War	approximately 820 (26%)	123 (16%)	7 (1%)	7 (2%)	957 (20%)
Dutch East Indies	ca. 2100 (68%)	562 (73%)	216 (38%)	51 (13%)	2929 (61%)
Korea	143 (5%)	31 (4%)	20 (4%)	3 (1%)	197 (4%)
New Guinea	7 (0%)	25 (3%)	42 (8%)	12 (3%)	86 (2%)
Lebanon	31 (1%)	21 (3%)	122 (22%)	61 (15%)	235 (5%)
Former Yugoslavia	-	9 (1%)	141 (25%)	105 (26%)	255 (5%)
Afghanistan			5 (1%)	112 (28%)	117 (2%)
Deployed elsewhere	-	3 (0%)	10 (2%)	47 (12%)	60 (1%)

Granting commemorative badges to retired veterans

The Minister of Defence decides whether or not to grant the Commemorative Badge for the Wounded and signs the accompanying certificate. The *CADIG* secretary then discusses with the veteran the way in which the commemorative badge will be presented. The veteran can choose to have it presented officially in his own place of residence by the mayor, or at the Veterans' Institute. A veteran will occasionally prefer to have the commemorative badge and accompanying certificate posted to him. In recent years, some retired veterans have also received their commemorative badges from the current commanding officer of their former unit or during ceremonies on the Netherlands Veterans' Day.

Presenting commemorative badges to veterans in active service

Commemorative badges are also granted to service personnel on active duty, increasingly so on account of the combat operations in Afghanistan. In many cases, they are granted for physical injuries. Until the middle of 2008, when today's *CADIG* was set up, the responsibility for assessing and granting commemorative badges was shared by the separate branches of the armed forces and the Decorations Section, the predecessor of the Decorations Unit of the Veterans, Reservists and Decorations Executive Agency. According to information from that unit and the *CADIG*, by 2009 the Commemorative Badge for the Wounded had been granted to about one hundred servicemen or service women. As from 2009, the Commemorative Badge for the Wounded has been granted to 130 servicemen or service women. The current commanding officer or another military authority usually presents them.

Further information

This fact sheet provides general information. No rights may be derived from its contents. For further information about the commemorative badge, go to the websites www.veteraneninstituut.nl and www.mindef.nl, or contact us by telephone (088 334 00 50) or by email (info@veteraneninstituut.nl).

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