

Brigadier Martin Wijnen, Commander of 43 Mechanized Brigade, Netherlands Army

After his graduation as a civil engineer at the Royal Military Academy – winning the award for the best research paper of 1988 – Wijnen was, for his junior officer assignments, stationed in Germany as an armoured engineer in the rank of lieutenant.

In 1992, he moved back to the Netherlands to work in the G3 Operations Branch of a Divisional Headquarters after being promoted to the rank of captain. His first deployment followed later that year as Commander of a Mine Clearance Training Team in Cambodia. Two more deployments followed shortly thereafter: as liaison officer for an Emergency Relief Detachment in the Netherlands Antilles and as second-in-command of the Engineers Company of IFOR-1 in Bosnia.

As of mid-1997, he attended the Command and General Staff Officers Course at the Netherlands Defence College. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of major and served as Staff Officer for the Plans Branch of the Royal Netherlands Army Staff in The Hague. He was then selected to attend the US Army Command and General Staff Officers Course (2000-2001) at Fort Leavenworth in the US. He obtained his degree as Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) on the basis of his research in the field of interagency cooperation.

Upon his return to the Netherlands, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and appointed as Head of the Strategy Division of the Netherlands Defence College. During this period – in 2002 – he was deployed to CENTCOM, Tampa, US, as an MoD Liaison Officer for Operation Enduring Freedom and ISAF. In 2003, he again served as Staff Officer for the Plans Branch, this time at the Defence Staff. In 2005, he assumed command of 11 Armoured Engineer Battalion.

In late 2007, he was promoted to colonel and appointed Head of the Policy Support Division of the staff of the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Army. In 2009, he was deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, to serve as Chief of the Plans Branch of ISAF's Regional Command South. Following this deployment, he attended the Advanced Defence Course at the Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael'.

As of June 2010, he worked for the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the Ministry of Security and Justice in The Hague. In the November 2010 – February 2011 timeframe, he was called upon to lead one of the study teams (Fixed Wing Air Force) to invent solutions for the large budget cuts that the Netherlands Ministry of Defence was facing.

In June 2012, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and appointed Deputy Director of Plans in the Defence Staff. Currently he is Commander of 43 Mechanised Brigade.