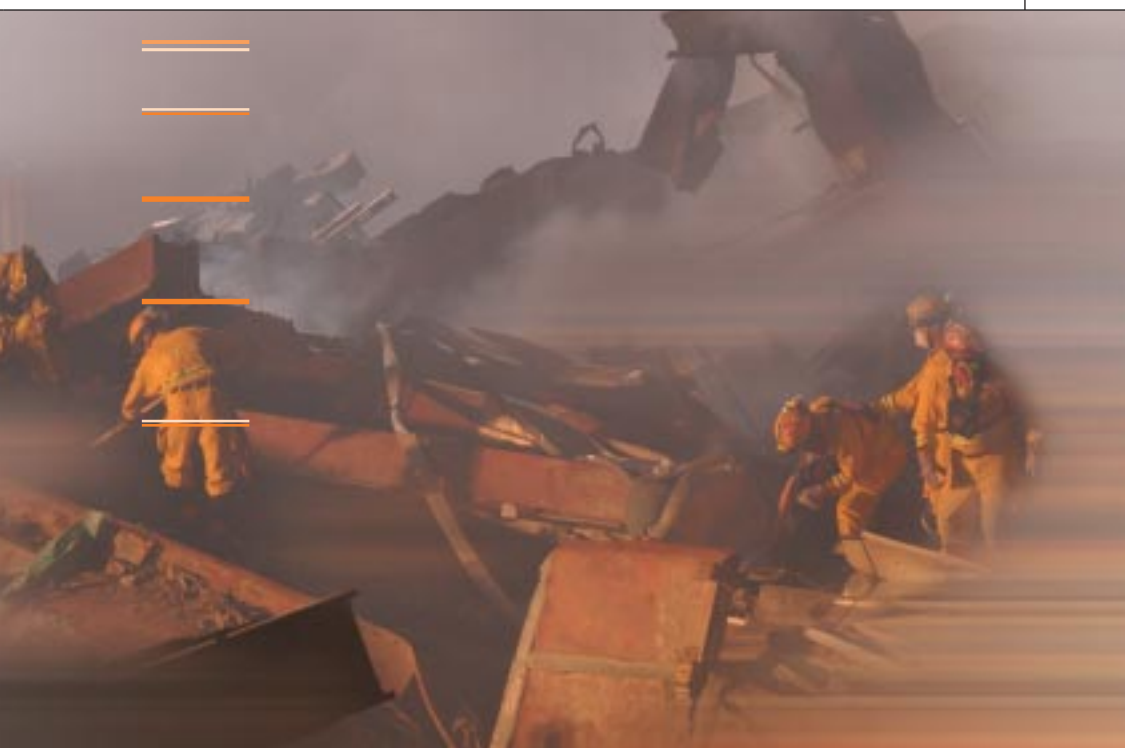




USAR.NL
URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM



The Dutch International
Urban Search and Rescue Team



Providing emergency medical aid under difficult circumstances.

USAR.NL

The earthquake in Turkey and the fireworks explosion in Enschede have prompted the Netherlands to set up a specialist search and rescue support team which can be deployed in the Netherlands, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, and in countries outside the Kingdom of the Netherlands up to six hours flying time from the Netherlands. The team will be known as 'Urban Search & Rescue', or USAR.NL.

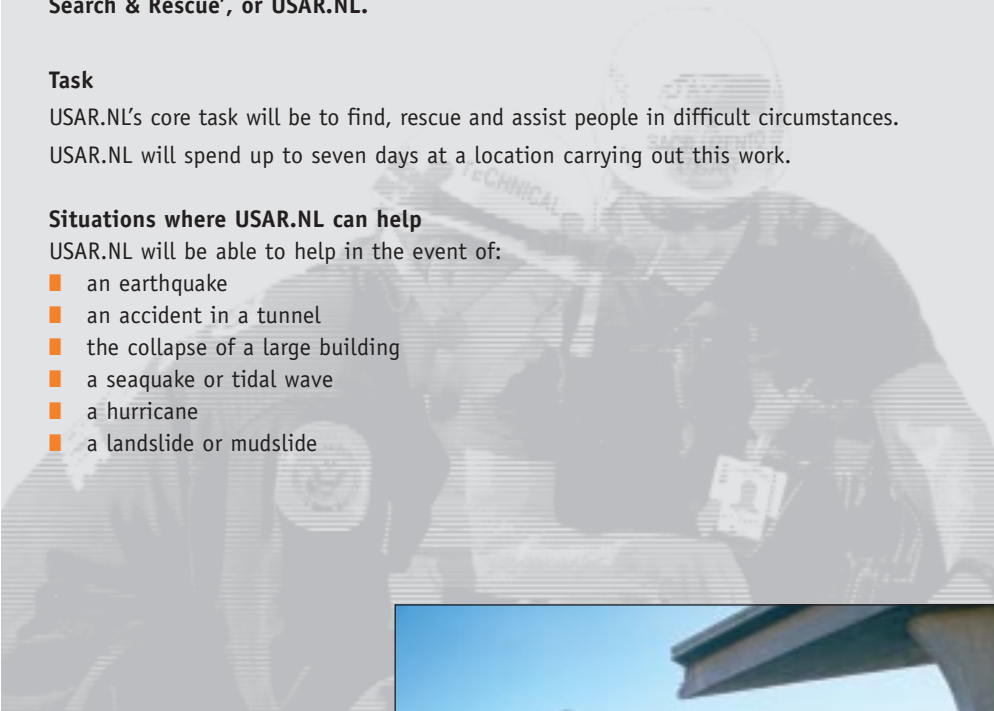
Task

USAR.NL's core task will be to find, rescue and assist people in difficult circumstances. USAR.NL will spend up to seven days at a location carrying out this work.

Situations where USAR.NL can help

USAR.NL will be able to help in the event of:

- an earthquake
- an accident in a tunnel
- the collapse of a large building
- a seaquake or tidal wave
- a hurricane
- a landslide or mudslide



The local infrastructure is often severely damaged.



Devastation after a lands

An operation...

A major earthquake. Several villages have been engulfed in sand and debris. It is unclear exactly how many people are missing, but the number is expected to be high. The authorities do not have enough capacity to cope with the disaster and ask for assistance. It seems Dutch help is needed, so USAR.NL is alerted. The team goes to the airport, where they are briefed while their equipment is loaded. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the local embassy make the necessary arrangements. Twenty-four hours after the alarm was raised, USAR.NL arrives at the scene. The situation is still unclear when the search and rescue operation commences. Equipment is in short supply, there are probably a lot of casualties, there is little coordination and many survivors are desperately searching for their relatives.

The rescue units work in shifts. Their specially trained rescue dogs and their modern equipment allow them to work highly effectively. Paramedics treat the victims' injuries at the scene, with the help of the USAR doctor when necessary, and the victims are then transferred to the local authorities for further care. Unfortunately, bodies have also been found in the wreckage, and they are carefully recovered, with respect for local and religious customs and with a view to later identification.

The Command Unit and Staff Unit head the team and liaise with the local authorities, the Dutch embassy and the UN disaster assistance and coordination team. If necessary, they will set up an international coordination centre. The team remains in constant contact with the National Operational Team in the Netherlands. The Support Unit, meanwhile, takes care of the search and rescue workers, their dogs and the equipment.

As time passes, the prospects of finding more victims alive fade. Sadly, after five days – the disaster occurred six days ago – no more survivors are found. While some of the USAR team continue to provide assistance, the rest begin tying up the loose ends and handing over the work. The equipment is packed up or handed over, the staff returns to home base. On arrival in the Netherlands the initial debriefing takes place, after which everyone goes home. This is where after-care begins: counselling for the team members, reporting and evaluation.





ide.

Despair and sorrow.

Searching, manually. And with high-tec equipment.

Criteria for deployment

In view of USAR.NL's objectives, it will be deployed on the following conditions:

- there must be a serious or large-scale disaster
- a request for help must have been received, or set in motion
- there must be a need to search for and rescue people and animals
- the type and scale of the disaster must fit the 'urban search and rescue' profile

The following additional criteria will apply to deployment abroad:

- the travelling time must be acceptable (no more than around six hours' flying), with the exception of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba
- funds must be available
- the personal safety of the USAR members must be sufficiently guaranteed
- bilateral contacts must good enough to ensure that assistance is possible and desirable; there must be no procedural or political obstacles

[*Arjun Katoch* Secretary, International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and Chief, FCSS, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs]



"The international urban search and rescue community looks forward to the participation of our Dutch colleagues."

Decision to deploy

Every week, a disaster occurs somewhere in the world. But for USAR.NL to deploy, it must serve a reasonable purpose. In other words, its task is to boost local capacity. In the case of the Netherlands, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, the situation will be assessed by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will decide whether USAR.NL should be deployed in other countries. USAR.NL will be one form of emergency aid in the foreign ministry's repertoire. The decision to deploy will always be taken in consultation with the USAR.NL commander.

Loading the equipment.





Searching for survivors from the air.

The people and the organisation

USAR.NL will be made up of staff from various emergency and other services. Team members will therefore be engaged in the activities they bring to the USAR.NL team in their daily work. A USAR team will include four Rescue Units, one Support Unit, a Staff Unit and a Command Unit. Teams are multidisciplinary, comprising search and rescue workers, paramedics and doctors, rescue dog handlers, support staff and management. Each team will have around 65 members. Most will come from the fire service, police, emergency medical services and the military.

The team will use sophisticated search and rescue equipment and will be able to be on location within 24 hours, using air transport. USAR.NL's structure and methods will be tailored to agreements made with other countries under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will pay USAR.NL's day-to-day running costs, and bear ultimate responsibility for the organisation. The costs of deployment abroad will be recouped via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Modular structure

USAR.NL will have a modular structure, making it possible for just parts of the team to be deployed, rather than the entire team.

For example:

- two rather than four rescue units
- the command and staff units only
- the command, staff and support units only

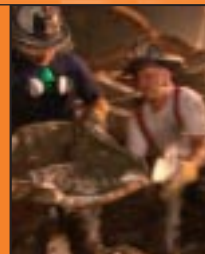
This last option might be required if there were sufficient qualified rescue workers available, but a lack of command and support capacity.

[*Elie van Strien* Ministry for the Interior/ Director Disaster Control and Fire Services Department]



"An important step towards professional and well organised disaster assistance abroad "

Disasters of all kinds.





Devastation as a result of the enormous force of a mudslide.

Self-supporting

USAR.NL will be equipped in such a way that it need make only limited use of local resources in the vicinity of the disaster. It will need local support in the form of transport if it arrives by plane, and assistance with border controls (e.g. customs) and camp security. Interpreters might also be needed.

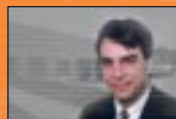
USAR.NL will be deployed in other countries only after consultation with the local Dutch embassy. The necessary support will also be organised in consultation with the embassy.

Authority and coordination

At home, USAR.NL will generally operate under the local supreme authority, usually the mayor. Operations will be coordinated in accordance with protocols. On request, the USAR.NL commander will be able to act as commander in the disaster area.

In other countries, USAR.NL will operate under the authority of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Operations will be coordinated in accordance with the structures laid down within the United Nations. Under these agreed structures, USAR.NL will start coordinating the operations of foreign teams if it is first on the scene.

[**Pim Kraan** Deputy Head of the Humanitarian Affairs Department,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs]



**"USAR.NL is an important and
necessary addition
to the Dutch emergency assistance capacity."**



Searching for survivors.



A disaster area can sometimes be quite vast.

[**Don Berghuijs** Commander of the Regional Emergency Services of Rotterdam-Rijnmond]



“USAR.NL contributes to professionalism and to operational quality. That’s good for others, but also good for us!”

Training and exercises

All USAR staff will follow the same basic training to prepare them for work abroad in accordance with the search and rescue team protocols laid down within the United Nations.

Tailor-made training and exercise programmes will be provided for each particular job within the team. Team members whose job is to maintain contact with the local authorities and population during operations will be prepared through international contacts and internships.

Participating organisations

USAR.NL is being built up with the cooperation of:

- Rotterdam-Rijnmond Regional Emergency Services
- Haaglanden Regional Emergency Services
- Hollands-Midden Regional Emergency Services
- Zuid-Holland-Zuid Regional Emergency Services
- National Police Services Agency
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

The regional emergency services include the fire service and emergency paramedics.

Mobile communications equipment.





Teamwork is a necessity.

Planning

USAR.NL will be built up in two stages, so that the plans can be adjusted if necessary. The first round will be completed in the course of 2003. USAR.NL will then be deployable, albeit not at full capacity. The second round will be completed in late 2003/early 2004, after which USAR.NL will be fully operational.

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For further information on USAR.NL, go to

WWW.USAR.NL

Please feel free to email any questions or suggestions to info@USAR.NL



[*Jos Keulen* Projectleader of USAR.NL]

"Together we are setting up a multidisciplinary team that will be respected both nationally and internationally."