

# Disaster Assistance Response Teams

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## 1. Introduction

In this article it is my intention to acquaint the reader with Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART). After a short sketch of its origin, the organisation, mission, way of operating and manner of deployment will be discussed. The possible deployment of Military Emergency Aid Units will briefly be touched upon, after which the relation between DART and Non-Governmental Organisations will be looked into. Finally, there will be a short description of the various missions in which DART took part.

## 2. History

DART was formally established in 1996. Before 1996 the Royal Netherlands Army already had a reconnaissance unit that could be deployed in areas stricken by humanitarian disasters. But an evaluation of the deployment of armed forces elements in Ghoma showed that there had not been any real structural thinking about it. On 17 May 1995 the then Minister of Defence reported to the States General that he intended to have a Military Emergency Aid Reconnaissance Team per 1 October 1996 in readiness.

## 3. Mission

The task of DART can best be described by a literal translation of the Dutch word *noodhulpverkenningsteam* (disaster assistance reconnaissance team). A further elaboration of this term produces the following description of the mission: 'By order of the Dutch government, to carry out a reconnaissance in an area struck by a humanitarian disaster, aimed at an assessment of the damage and to report this damage to the Dutch government'. The assessment of the damage also includes an estimation of deployable means still available to and present in the stricken area. The reconnaissance specifically concerns the immediately required disaster assistance, which can best be described as the assistance a community immediately needs after a disaster has struck, to relieve the primary needs of the people: survival, food, drinking water, medical supplies, emergency accommodation and relief. For planning purposes a period of six weeks of disaster assistance following the disaster is assumed.

It is clearly stated that DART will be deployed in disaster circumstances, which means natural disasters, but also in case of a great deluge of refugees resulting from war situations or life threatening circumstances. When strength, mission and armament of the team are considered, it is not very likely that DART will be deployed in actual war zones.

Should the Dutch government decide to send Military Emergency Aid units to a stricken area, DART will form the nucleus of the staff that manages these units on the spot. This is the follow-up mission for DART.

Apart from carrying out reconnaissance missions, DART can also be employed to reinforce the Embassy personnel already on the spot, to support specific aid units by carrying out C3 (Command, Control and Communication) activities or to support the already operable

coordination cell of the United Nations or local authorities. A DART mission can be carried out by the whole team all over the globe, with the exception of arctic areas.

#### **4. DART personnel**

There is no fixed composition of DART, which will be manned completely dependent on the scenario. The lightest team consists of two men, whereas the heaviest deployment mode uses ten military and one civilian employee from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their functions are as follows:

1. The commander, whose main task is leading the team and editing the final version of the reconnaissance report. When emergency aid units are deployed he commands these units (rank: lieutenant colonel).
2. The team's sergeant major is responsible for the administrative and operational tasks in case of the team's deployment. Apart from that he is responsible for the maintenance and usability of the material (rank: sergeant major).
3. The signals NCO has to make all internal and external communication operable and maintain it. He is also the ICT specialist (rank: sergeant major 1st class/warrant officer).
4. The engineer officer is responsible for the infrastructure and facilities chapter in the reconnaissance report (rank: major).
5. The transport officer takes care of the transport issues in the reconnaissance report (sea/airports/rail and road traffic) and arranges all DART transport requirements inside the area of operations. When Dutch units are deployed in a stricken area the transport officer sees to the transport of these units (rank: major).
6. The legal officer deals with the legal aspects of deployment and coordinates the calamity plan (rank: major).
7. The press officer is responsible for all media issues relating to the deployment of the team (rank: lieutenant/captain).
8. The security officer has to assess the safety situation and take measures directed at optimising the safety of the team in the area of operations. He co-writes the calamity plan. When security units are deployed in the area he commands them (rank: captain or major).
9. The contract manager controls and manages the financial affairs and he provides any material needs the team may have. In case of deployment he conducts the contract negotiations (rank: lieutenant/captain).
10. The medical officer takes care of the health situation in the team and contributes to the reconnaissance report his estimation of the medical situation in the stricken area. In case of deployment he will act as senior medical advisor (rank: major/lieutenant colonel).
11. The Foreign Affairs representative, when attached to the team, will be responsible for liaising with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in situ with the representative of the Netherlands in that country and the (local) administrators.

As DART is on standby 24 hours a day, the total DART pool consists of three times ten functionaries. Per function in the team three persons are required, allowing one to be on exercise and one on holiday. These three men/women make their own availability schedule. This means there is always one full team available, but it is never a fixed team: when there is an alert, those on duty simply show up.

The functions are filled by RNLN, RNLA and RNLAf personnel. Being a member of DART partially comes with the job in that it is an integral part of someone's job description. The vast majority of DART personnel are volunteers, though, who are available for service with DART beside their normal jobs.

When deployed in the stricken area, DART will be supported by Netherlands Embassy personnel. The foreign affairs representative, when attached, has a task in this. When DART is deployed without its vehicles, there will be a request to the Netherlands Embassy for means of transport, prior to departure. And last but not least the requirement for interpreters will also be directed to the Embassy.

## **5. DART equipment**

As with the personnel, the material composition of the team is dependent on the situation on the spot. In the lightest mode of the deployment the team members have their own bergens, a portable aggregate (1kW), and communication equipment (the so-called 'fast kit'). Means of transport have to be hired on site.

In the heavy option the team have three all-terrain vehicles and one trailer. There is enough food and water for seven days and the team have their own limited supply of fuel and an aggregate. For communication purposes the team have at their disposal the latest state-of-the-art equipment for communication within the unit as well as with the Netherlands. The team is able to establish and operate its own command post without the help of others. It has its own accommodation.

For a speedy processing of reconnaissance data portable ICT-equipment is used. When on a reconnaissance, the team members can make use of digital recording equipment. Dependent on the threat, a choice can be made for armed deployment, exclusively for self-defence.

The whole team is air-portable with an C-130 or KDC-10 or any comparable plane. All the equipment is transported in accordance with the IATA regulations (International Air Transport Association).

## **6. DART deployment requirements**

DART is only deployed on request of the stricken country. The members always wear military uniform. In case of armed deployment, the commander can decide to wear arms openly, or keep them in the vehicles.

Deployment of Military Emergency Aid Units is realised with units from the regular defence organisation, as the Netherlands Armed Forces do not have any specific units for humanitarian operations.

In DART as well as Military Emergency Aid Units deployment the execution of the necessary work is handed over as soon as possible to regular aid organisations or NGOs. In principle the duration of the deployment is estimated at six weeks, after which the emergency aid stops and the rehabilitation phase begins. In the rehabilitation phase (estimated at six months) the area is brought back to the level prior to the disaster. Deployment of military units in this phase is considered to be contribution to a humanitarian operation. Obviously, the terms mentioned here are theoretical, as practice may show a different picture.

In principle, the material used is taken back to the Netherlands, but this, too, has to be considered in the light of practicability: the cost of returning them may be higher than purchasing the used material anew.

## **7. Requirements for DART personnel**

In spite of the fact that DART is mostly manned by volunteers, taking additional training is mandatory for the members. Every prospective DART member is given an additional training of one week in the Netherlands on the organisation and mode of operating in an area of operations. Besides, the aspirant member learns to handle the specific DART equipment.

There are plans to stage an annual follow-up course in a country with an unfamiliar language. During this exercise two teams will be deployed consecutively, while the third team trains them. In this manner DART conducted a large-scale exercise in Rumania in September of 2001. In the vicinity of Timisoara it was deployed to support to the already present Rumanian emergency aid units. The scenario presented a series of major earthquakes which proved too much for the Rumanian capacity.

Apart from these exercises there are workshops of a day and a half twice a year, where the latest developments in equipment are presented, the lessons learned of exercises are discussed, and representatives of NGOs are invited to exchange experiences.

Annually various DART members follow international courses, in order to exchange experiences and to build up a network. The latter is one of the critical success factors in actual operational deployment: in operational circumstances there is hardly any time for getting to know the other aid agencies. Being familiar with various organisations active in the area, or even with the aid workers themselves, will enhance the successful execution of the mission.

The availability of the various team members is of the utmost importance, as each of them has a specific experience and know-how. If one or more members drop out, this will endanger the mission. In an area stricken by a disaster all sorts of diseases may emerge and because of that all DART members have been fully immunised.

## **8. The decision making for DART deployment**

The request for emergency aid is made by the stricken country and it is directed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Whether or not DART will be deployed is a political decision. In case the giving of emergency aid is considered, the Crisis Control and Humanitarian Aid Directorate (DCH) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will contact the Defence Crisis Control Centre (DCBC). When it is considered to give emergency aid, a reconnaissance unit is first deployed. The DCBC has the Crisis Staff of the CiC of the Land Forces alert the DART commander, who in turn alerts the Head of Administration, who subsequently calls up the rest of the team. Within six hours after the DART commander has been alerted every member on duty, equipped with a pager for the purpose, has to report at the Crisis Staff. During the decision making meeting at the DCBC, at which the DART commander is present, the composition of the team to be deployed is discussed. Simultaneously, the press statement is worked out.

When it concerns the deployment of a team with the 'fast kit', the moment of departure is in theory six hours after the first alert. All this is of course dependent on mode of transport to the mission area. For this purpose planes of civilian air companies can be used. If the heaviest team is chosen, it has to be loaded and ready for departure within 24 hours after the alert has first come in. Here, too, the choice may be for transport in a civilian carrier.

Although it is not official doctrine, it is worth considering to increase the rapidity of DART by dispatching a light team ahead of the heavy team. Flexibility and speed are two characteristics of DART.

## **9. Operating in a stricken area**

There are no standard procedures for deployment in a stricken area. Because of the multitude of factors of influence, every mission will be different from the previous or following one, which means that it is not feasible to lay down fixed procedures for every possible mission. Some important factors of influence are:

- DART will only be deployed in circumstances in which the demand for aid exceeds the supply. The capacity for aid in the immediately neighbouring areas is not sufficient to cope with that mismatch, which makes third world countries the most likely options for DART deployment. Every country in the world, and indeed every part of a country, has its own characteristics, culture, and level of development. It has its own problems and specific political situation. More often than not, DART will have no actual experience with these features of the area of operations.
- Depending on the level of disaster aid and the means present, a stricken country will request help through the UN, other countries or NGOs, and each of them will send their own organisational elements. Apart from these international actors there are also national and local organisations active. This diversity demands a coordinated employment of means, which in actual fact is one of the greatest challenges of deployment in disaster circumstances. It is never clear beforehand which organisations are going to be active in the area and what the level of coordination is going to be.
- Every type of humanitarian disaster creates its own specific situation. The various phases following a disaster also determine the need for help. The moment of entry of DART is dependent on the moment at which the country made the request for international support and the pace of the subsequent political decision making.
- Generally speaking, CIMIC will be part of the mission in a (crisis control) situation, where it plays a supporting role in achieving the military mission. For DART CIMIC is the mission, as there is no situation thinkable in which DART would be able to operate within a humanitarian aid context without cooperation with civilian authorities. This cooperation of the military with NGOs lends a special dimension to being a member of a DART team. After the fall of the Berlin Wall both groups were confronted with each other. Their combat fatigue makes soldiers suspect in third world countries, as often the local population has bad experiences with uniformed organisations. What remains is a natural distrust of the military by the population as well as the NGOs. Deployment in crisis control and humanitarian operations of military units steadily increased over the years, instigated by an increasing demand for help and a change in the nature of conflicts. A decade or so later it is possible to discern more and more overtures between the two groups. Courses are taken together, and several missions have been set up in cooperation and carried out successfully. The sharp edges have disappeared and there is mutual profiting of each other's strong points. An important principle in the cooperation is the realisation that the military have no intention of taking over from the NGOs. The right stance for the DART commander is, 'tell us what we can do for you'. When it is possible for the civilian authorities or NGOs to take over, DART should leave the area as soon as possible.
- The operational circumstances in which DART has to act determine its operating mode, up to an extent. Immediately after the disaster chaos will reign. Still, DART will have to attempt to acquire a clear picture of the situation: what has happened, what is the still available capacity, which NGOs will do what, what help is under way, etc. A first requirement for answering these questions is operating in a coordinated manner. There will certainly be attempts at coordination within the elements of the (local) authorities involved in supplying aid or managing the administering of aid. Such a coordinating body is indicated by UN with the acronym LEMA (Local Emergency Management Authorities). The UN are often active in third world countries and after a disaster has taken place elements of the already present UN organisations will try to coordinate their collective efforts (UN Disaster Management Team: UNDMT). This UNDMT will maintain a close cooperation with the local authorities; after all, these organisations are already familiar to the authorities, which will make working together all the more

smooth. An element of the Disaster Response Branch of the UN is the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, with its office in Geneva). Requests for aid by the stricken country, if directed through the UN, will be passed on by OCHA, which has no means of its own, with the exception of the so-called UNDAC teams: UN Disaster Assessment Coordination. These are groups of volunteers who, on request of the UN, may carry out a brief reconnaissance mission and/or set up a coordination cell, the OSOCC (On-Site Operations and Coordination Centre). OCHA has no command authority over these volunteers.

- In the stricken area soon many aid agencies will be present, and it is not always clear who they are and what resources they have. They are not under anyone's command, not even the UN's. Everyone realises that coordination is necessary, but there is also some reluctance towards undergoing it.
- Coordination presupposes a certain power of decision, which is not always there. The civilian and military aid agencies on the spot have different interests. A certain reputation of the NGOs will be a supporting factor in the acquisition of funds. For the politicians it is important to be able to show their own countries and the world that the military units are doing a good job. So, it is not unthinkable that a dispute on competence among the various aid agencies may develop.
- It is a real challenge to get a good picture of what constitutes real information and what not, and OSOCC or LEMA will be able to supply it, if they are there and operational. OCHA process the information they get on reliefweb (reliefweb.int), which considerably increases the availability of the most current information.
- Naturally, the composition of the team influences the way of operating. So if no fixed procedures can be given, it is left to DART itself to determine the most appropriate operating mode after a quick on site assessment of the situation. The experiences of previous missions and a further analysis of the assignment have led to guidelines for the team to follow.
- Speed is of great importance: in crisis situations quick communication can save lives. Thus, the first 72 hours after an earthquake are decisive, and a speedy deployment of emergency aid units is essential then. Besides, a rapid reaction can prevent a situation in which public opinion presses for the undertaking of well-meaning initiatives, without a sound inventory of actual needs. When there is a large demand for aid the still available infrastructure or means of transport can become overtaxed, whereas aid goods that are unnecessary or not removed in time may obstruct the supply of aid rather than enhance it. Not only the depth of the humanitarian catastrophe has an impact on the problem of making a speedy evaluation of the situation. Also the size of the disaster and the accessibility of the area strongly determine the time needed for this evaluation. Thus, the area flooded in Mozambique in 2000 was approximately as large as the former West Germany. On the other hand, there is the pressure from public opinion that, reinforced as it may be by the reports of the omnipresent media, demands a quick response. In case of slow political decision making, the pressure from public opinion will have made itself felt already at the moment that DART is alerted. Still, DART will have to take the time to make a good reconnaissance, which, after all, is the basis for a good administering of aid. On its reconnaissance, DART will make use of its own observation, data derived from interviews with NGOs, the UN, the local authorities and the people that have been affected themselves.
- Accuracy in the collecting of the reconnaissance data is a prerequisite for a correct definition of the need for emergency aid, and it can only be obtained by verifying the collected information. Immediately after a disaster has struck there will be absolutely no coordination. After the latest earthquake in India there was heavy criticism on the time

needed to set up a coordinated and structured action. Even in countries with a well-prepared contingency plan, the damage to the emergency services organisation in the area itself can increase the chaos, as was the case in the most recent earthquakes in Turkey in 1999, where the extent of the damage was such that it seriously degraded the emergency services organisations.

- Low-profile action is the only way to guarantee that there is not going to be rivalry immediately after arrival. One of the characteristics of a military organisation is a standardised, thorough and quick decision making process, followed by a rather directive style of command. As time pressure increases and crisis circumstances develop, this command style will become more directive. This approach is fully accepted in a military environment, which has a hierarchical build-up and whose personnel are familiar with this way of command and control. The aid organisations involved in humanitarian disasters are often not military in character. Within the civilian organisations people have different ways of working together. Acting as if they are military personnel will have a contrary effect. This may at times affect the cooperation with the military, which may become difficult, and the stricken population may be the worse off because of it. In our western world time is money. Matters must be dealt with quickly and as efficiently as possible. There is often hardly any room for interpersonal contact. In other cultures this is totally different. If the wish to make time for a proper greeting and exchange of courtesies is ignored, it will quickly lead to a cultural clash. Not observing customs will affect the cooperation, or make it even impossible. In such a situation it is wise to try to find a balance between respect for the other, on the one hand, and the execution of the mission, on the other.

The different factors of influence sometimes are at odds with each other. Verification of the data costs time, in particular when chaos reigns and emotions take over. Thus, in military eyes, the less rigid way of decision making and managing by NGOs will take much time. There are no guidelines here. It is DART itself that determines when a reliable reconnaissance report can be written on the basis of the available material. It is even possible to choose for a phased reconnaissance: first a superficial reconnaissance after which a first concise report will be produced; then, further reconnaissance data will provide more detailed information.

## **10. The composition of the reconnaissance report**

After a brief description of the actual events, an assessment per sector will have to be supplied of the damage, the relief resources present (personnel, material and processes), the short-term employable material resources, the aid that has already been requested/offered and the means present in the area to administer the aid that has arrived. Apart from that, DART is expected to work out a short-term expectation. Thus, the doctor of the team will not only have to indicate the present medical situation, but he will also have to make an assessment of the future situation in terms of weather influences, shortage of care, the present health situation and other factors. DART will also advise as to which units of the Netherlands armed forces, or parts of units, are most suitable for deployment in the stricken area. DART functionaries, of course, have an insight in the possibilities in their speciality. Thus, the engineer officer has access to the capacities of the various engineer units within the Royal Netherlands Army, and he will make pertinent recommendations to deploy these units.

## **11. Political decision making after reporting**

On the basis of, amongst others, the DART reconnaissance report the Dutch political authorities will decide whether our country will make aid available and in what form. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is leading in this process. For that reason the report is forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Embassy in the stricken country) as well as the Defence Crisis Control Centre. Giving aid can be realised in various forms: money, the sending of equipment or (military) aid units. In the case of the Turkish earthquake the Dutch government sent money. Personnel of the Department of Public Works were deployed during the floods in Poland. In case of actual deployment of Military Emergency Aid Units the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence will coordinate the help, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs leading.

## **12. Opplan 15**

The Netherlands armed forces have no longer earmarked certain units of the four Services as Military Emergency Aid Units. All regular units that can temporarily be taken off their normal tasks can be deployed for a short period as aid units. There is no need for the units to be deployed as a whole. When needed, specific elements can be flown in within 72 hours after alerting the unit. This prepared deployment is described in Operation Plan 15 of the CiC of the Land Forces. The medical elements of these emergency aid units can serve as an example of such flexible, tailor-made units.

## **13. Medical Humanitarian Emergency Aid Units**

The military medical evacuation system is divided into so-called roles. A role is a level or echelon of medical care. A higher role has more medical capacity than a lower one. For emergency aid only roles 1 through 3 are applicable.

### **Role-1**

The care given at the beginning of the medical treatment and evacuation chain (care system); it is characterised by non-specialist treatment primarily aimed at saving life and limb and the immediate evacuation to a higher level of care. This is the first care station where a doctor is present.

### **Role-2**

The care that is given in addition to role-1 and which is mainly directed at saving life and/or limb, as well as further care with a view to restoring employability (with limited nursing) and the evacuation to role-3.

### **Role-3**

The specialist care, in addition to role-1 and role-2, as well as care aimed at employability and evacuation to role-4.

### **Role-4**

The care characterised by full (specialist) end care, directed at reaching the medical end state, if necessary after convalescence.

The higher the role, the more medical capacities there are and the greater the size of the unit becomes. After all, a medical facility with an operating theatre requires more personnel, equipment and infrastructure than a facility that only offers urgent treatment. A heavier unit leads to more problems when it has to be moved. A regular tented hospital has three operating theatres and transporting it requires 40 20ft containers. As the Netherlands only has 4 heavy

or medium heavy transport carriers, this capacity will often be insufficient. At a moment at which the world responds to a humanitarian catastrophe the availability of strategic airlift will be strongly limited as well. On top of that, there is the transport problem on arrival. More often than not the infrastructure in the direct vicinity of the disaster area will also have been affected or be overtaxed. Planes will be overloaded, transport by water will take relatively long, and the local means of transport will not be able to meet the demand.

A tailor-made unit is the answer to this logistic problem. It is for this reason that medical emergency aid is staged in four steps.

#### Step 1

In this phase 7 teams can be deployed, each consisting of a doctor and 3 nurses. The personnel take their own personal equipment (in bergens). It can certainly depart within 72 hours. The equipment is supplemented by the New Emergency Health Kit of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

#### Step 2

Of the 7 teams of the first phase 4 teams can be expanded into an *aid station*. This aid station is a role-1 medical facility. In order to achieve this transfer, the 4 teams will be given 2 assistants each. Tents, additional medical equipment, 20 beds/mattresses, a limited power supply and water storage capacity are flown in for each of the aid stations. For this form of emergency aid a deployment within 72 hours is feasible. The teams that have not been expanded can be deployed independently from the aid stations. The remaining 3 teams from step-1 can be deployed apart from the aid station.

#### Step 3

The aid stations created in phase-2 can be merged into a *dressing station* (role-2). This station will have 18 or 24 tents. The nursing capacity is 100 stretchers/mattresses. The personnel capacity is increased by a command and control group, a logistic group and a laboratory group. The dressing station has limited surgical capacity.

#### Step 4

The deployed dressing station is transferred into a role-3 *hospital*, for which modules are added to set up a limited operating theatre (including a specialist group, a specialist support group, a sterilisation group and a radiology group).

In this mode of operating it is not necessary to start with step-1 and then to go through each consecutive step. The personnel and equipment come from regular units of the RNLN, RNLA, and RNLAf and in fact a choice is made of the available resources. It is clear this way of deployment is flexible and fast, indeed. In the build-up from step-1 through the following steps to step-4 it should be realised that once committed and operable, medical facilities cannot easily be withdrawn. In a disaster area a natural flow of casualties will occur spontaneously. It is hardly feasible to close a facility and open it elsewhere when there is already an influx of casualties. The suffering population will not understand this (linguistic problems). The most obvious deployment, therefore, is step-1 followed by the desired end step, without any other steps in between (for instance, moving from step-1 to step-3).

Logistic problems and other infrastructural provisions, such as personnel accommodation, are expected to have been dealt with by DART. Of course it can be said that this sounds very easy, but the answer would be that it is impossible to react fast, on the one hand, and to have everything arranged for the complete unit, on the other. A quick reaction on a humanitarian catastrophe requires open-ended decisions. Besides, the military may be expected to be able to function in difficult circumstances.

## 14. Why deploy DART ?

If there are so many NGOs and UN can deploy UNDAC teams, why should DART teams be deployed at all? As has been indicated before, speed is a decisive factor in a humanitarian catastrophe. NGOs will be present but not in sufficient numbers, and they too lack the necessary capacity. Many NGOs are budget dependent and as far as the UNDAC teams are concerned, a team can only be deployed after a search has been conducted among the members on duty.

For example, during the humanitarian disaster in East Timor it proved to be quite difficult for OCHA to find enough UNDAC members that could be deployed immediately. As has been mentioned above, there is no command authority from OCHA over the UNDAC members. DART, on the other hand, is fast and reachable 24 hours per day. It can be deployed completely independently within a 24-hour period, which makes it an instrument of great readiness. A few other strong points are:

- a guaranteed availability of a well-equipped DART team;
- flexibility with regard to tasking as well as composition;
- a guaranteed communication from the deployment area;
- a structured and impartial reporting of the situation;
- tailor-made aid of a limited duration;
- an existing and well-trained instrument of deployment.

## 15. Missions

Since its formation in 1996 DART has been active in a number of occasions:

- On 26 September 1998 the Windward Islands of St. Maarten, St. Eustasius and Saba were struck by **hurricane George**. On the same day it was decided to deploy DART. At four o'clock a.m. the team was flown to Curacao by KDC-10. On 27 September the team arrived in Saba and that same night a report was sent on the required emergency aid. The following day was used to normalise the situation and the Marine Corps restored the power supply in large parts of the island. On Thursday the damage and emergency aid requirement was assessed for St. Eustasius. On Saturday DART received a request to make a report on the emergency aid and rebuilding of Saba and St. Eustasius. It took four days to write the report and it showed that the data gathered about Saba and St. Eustasius that were sent to the Netherlands were still correct. The report contained three parts: immediate emergency aid, rebuilding and prevention. A year later it appeared that the rebuilding and preventive measures in the residential area of Golden Rock had been carried out well as the hurricanes 'José' and 'Lenny' had not damaged the houses.
- In November 1999 Honduras was struck by **hurricane Mitch**. The extent of the disaster led to DART being alerted on 5 November. The same day DART left with a boat detachment of the Marine Corps to Curacao. Together with the Marines stationed in the Caribbean DART was deployed in Honduras, where it engaged in transporting food by boat and making a reconnaissance of the roads, to see if the boat transports could be replaced by wheeled transport. The mission was adequately carried out and handed over. At the same time DART was tasked to assess the damage in the vicinity of the capital. It left Honduras on 22 November.
- On 19 October 1999 DART was alerted and flown in before **hurricane Jose** was to hit the island of St. Maarten. The advantage of this action was that the presence of a DART team in case of a disaster was assured. DART arrived on 20 October and prior to the landfall of the hurricane it made a quick reconnaissance of the island. The landfall was

in the night of 20 October and at dawn DART made a reconnaissance of St. Maarten. Quickly it became clear that there was no need for emergency aid as the hurricane had been one in the lightest category F-1. On 23 October DART was back again in the Netherlands.

- **Hurricane Lenny** quickly grew from a tropical storm into a category F-5 (the heaviest category) hurricane. On 16 November 1999 DART was alerted and departed in the early morning of 17 November. As the hurricane only moved slowly DART could not reach the Windward Islands before the 19th. A reconnaissance indicated that there was a limited need for emergency aid. DART arranged the request for and transport of water pumps to pump the flooded St. Maarten dry again. For Saba a new water purification plant was flown in and transported by naval vessel from St. Maarten to Saba. An additional assignment, on request of the Minister of the Interior, for DART was to set up a plan together with the local authorities for the rebuilding of the island. DART also made recommendations for weathering future hurricanes better. DART left St. Maarten on December 1.
- In February 2001 **Mozambique** was struck by heavy rainfall. DART was alerted on 2 March and its commander left on 3 March together with a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 4 March 50 rubber boats arrived in Mozambique. The Embassy had already prepared many things but they had no experience with giving logistic support to a military detachment. Later on 12 engineers arrived, who were going to teach the Mozambicans how to handle the boats. An NGO gave DART food to help the isolated population. OSOCC only works with large quantities of food and is mainly interested in air lift, so the Dutch capacity was hardly relevant for them. DART, therefore, went to look for its own assignments within the disaster area. For logistic support the team's sergeant major and the signals NCO were also flown in. After about 100 people had been trained on the boats and the 50 boats handed over to the local authorities, the mission ended after 30 days.

## 16. Conclusion

DART mainly consists of volunteers, people who accept that they are on immediate call, and when that call comes that there is no other object but to carry out the assignment quickly and adequately. The motivation of the people grows with every successful mission, and if there is to remain a basis for DART, the teams will have to be deployed. It will not be for want of effort by the personnel. They are ready for it.