

THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE NATO FORCES CELEBRATES ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITHIN NATO: SPECIAL PRESENTATION FROM THE NETHERLANDS



Picture Narrative: From left to right, Lt Col Overbeke, Adm Venturoni, Maj Bouchard and Vice Adm Sir Haddacks at the official presentation.

The Committee on Women in the NATO Forces, under the leadership of the Military Committee, has been in existence for 25 years. Back in 1961, a group of senior military women from seven nations first met in Copenhagen and adopted a resolution to meet at regular intervals to discuss employing women more widely in the Forces. This group grew over the years and was officially recognised by NATO's Military Committee in July 1976. The year 2001 therefore marks both the 40th anniversary since that first meeting in 1961 and the 25th anniversary of the group's official recognition within NATO.

To commemorate this important anniversary year, a special sculpture was presented on 19th September 2001 by the outgoing Chair of the Women in NATO Committee, Lieutenant Colonel Elleke OVERBEKE of the Netherlands Army, to NATO's Military Committee and the International Military Staff in recognition of the support they have given to the Committee over the past 25 years (see picture 1). This impressive bronze statue is of a woman holding a large eye over her head. The centre of the eye shows a man and a woman looking forward together in a spirit of future co-operation. The Military Committee decided to exhibit the sculpture for maximum visibility, in the NATO Conference area, near the Military Committee's Presentation Room. You may have already noticed it.

The Chairman of the Military Committee, Admiral Guido Venturoni, applauds The Netherlands for this innovative and symbolic contribution in support of women in uniform of the Alliance. May military service women continue to fulfil their important military roles and responsibilities in their respective nations and in support of NATO lead missions.