

# LTG Robert A.C. Bertholee

Commander, Royal Netherlands Army



LTG Bertholee was born on 7 August 1955 in Haarlem. Graduating from the Royal Military Academy in Breda, he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Artillery in 1979. After serving in various command functions as a company grade officer in the Netherlands and in Germany, he attended the Netherlands Staff College from January 1987 through December 1988. Returning to the Netherlands, he first served as a teacher and later as the Head of Strategy Department in the Netherlands Staff College.

From 1995 through 1997, he commanded 41<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Battalion in Seedorf (Germany). In this period the Netherlands Armed Forces abandoned the system of conscript soldiers and the battalion converted to an all-volunteer unit.

Promoted to Colonel in September 1997, he took command of the Fire Support Training Centre. One year later, the Commander in Chief of the Army appointed him as the Head of his Cabinet.

In early spring of 2000, he was sent to Kosovo as Commander of the Netherlands Contingent, tasked to plan and execute the redeployment of the Netherlands Forces. Following return from Kosovo he became the Head of International Planning Affairs at the Defence Staff in September 2000 and contributed to developing NATO and EU related policy.

A year later, he was promoted to Brigadier General and assigned as Chief of Staff of the 1<sup>st</sup> Netherlands Corps in Munster (Germany) in December 2001. At that time, the HQ was finalizing its transformation to a High Readiness Forces HQ, starting early 2001 and concluding with official NATO certification in November 2002.

When the Corps HQ was tasked to lead the ISAF mission, he spent seven months in Kabul as Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff, ISAF III. After the HQ's return in August 2003, he continued to serve as the Chief of Staff until December 2004. Two weeks later, with the HQ certified as a NATO Response Forces HQ, then Brigadier General Bertholee was awarded the "*Ehrenkreuz der Bundeswehr*" in Gold.

Between 1 February and 30 November 2006 he held the position of Director Operational Readiness in the recently reformed Defence Staff and was promoted to Major General

On 1 December 2006, he was appointed as Vice Chief of Defence and was promoted to Lieutenant General.

LTG Bertholee and his wife Ria, nee Bosch, have one daughter and live in the eastern part of the Netherlands.