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Combating the Covid-19

Double (Dutch) Anniversary !



In April 2020, the Netherlands Air Force's No.298 Squadron, flying the Boeing CH-47D 'Chinook' helicopter, celebrated twin anniversaries, its motto being '*Nihil Nobis Nimum*' (Nothing is too much for us). This was the 75th anniversary year of No. 298 squadron and the 25th of CH-47 Chinook helicopters in service with the Dutch Air Force.

To commemorate both anniversaries, a Chinook (tail number D-666) was painted on both sides, one with the squadron crest ('Libelle', or 'Dragonfly') and, on the other side, 'Grizzly' the (un)official nickname of the squadron.

Owing to the Corona virus prevalent in Europe, a big event was cancelled and instead replaced by a flyby over the Netherlands, with photographers invited to cover the Chinook landing at various landing sites.

Taking off from their homebase Gilze-Rijen, the first landing was at the GLV5 low flying training ground. Two passes plus

two landings and take offs were performed to display both sides of the Chinook to photographers. Later that day, other Dutch training grounds and airbases were visited to show-off this specially painted helicopter.

History of No.298 Squadron

No.298 Squadron was formed on 1 March 1950, as No.6 *Artillerie Verkennings Afdeling* (ARVA) (Artillery Reconnaissance Division) at Ypenburg Air Base, the first unit so established as part of the Light Aircraft Group (GPLV). The number of personnel and available accommodation was very limited to start with. The unit operated a number of Auster light reconnaissance aircraft, then moved to Soesterberg Air Base, then to Deelen Air Base in 1951. The Auster remained in service until 1953, the aircraft replaced by the Piper Cub in 1952, this aircraft also used for artillery reconnaissance and staff transport, the Piper Cubs remaining in active service until 1968.

In addition to the Piper Cub, the squadron was also equipped with the Hiller R23 Raven in 1955, the first helicopter type in service with the Dutch Air Force. Two years later the squadron moved again to Ypenburg Air Base, and received its first Allouette II in 1959, for the SAR task. The SAR flight then moved to Leeuwarden Air Base and was later renumbered as No 303 SAR Squadron, while No.298 Squadron moved back to Deelen Air Base, after Ypenburg was closed following budget cuts. The Allouette II was replaced by the Allouette III in 1964 and No.298 Squadron moved for the last time in 1966 to Soesterberg Air Base, sole with the Allouette III.

After 30 years, the Allouette III was replaced by the much bigger Boeing CH-47D Chinook in 1995 when the Royal Netherlands Air Force began to follow a new course, the helicopters playing a major role with the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The current Helicopter Group (GPH) now



has the new model, its designation changing to *Tactische Helikopter Groep Koninklijke Luchtmacht* (THG-KLu). No.298 Squadron received 13 Chinook helicopters, the first 7 purchased second hand from Canada, and modified to the CH-47D standard. The following 6 helicopters were newly built

by Boeing, No.298 Squadron becoming the heavy transport unit of the THG-KLu.

The main task of No.298 Squadron is to provide air transportation for the 11LMB (11 Airmobile Brigade), the Marine Corps (MARNS) and the Special Operations Forces (KCT).

In addition to the CH-47D, No.298 Squadron now also has a number of CH-47F helicopters which have a distinctive gray colour scheme. 🦋

All photos and all text: Joris van Boven and Alex van Noije

