

# Stichting Koninklijke Defensiemusea

## Abstract

The Stichting Koninklijke Defensiemusea (Royal Foundation for Defence Museums) was established in 2014 and houses several museums that were previously under the direct authority of the Ministry of Defence. The various museums manage extensive collections of weapons and other military objects. The collections also contain many objects related to the (military) colonial past of the Netherlands.

## History of the museum

The Stichting Koninklijke Defensiemusea (SKD) was established in 2014 and acts as the umbrella organisation for the Marinemuseum in Den Helder, the Mariniersmuseum in Rotterdam and the Nationaal Militair Museum in Soesterberg. Previously, these museums fell directly under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence, as is still the case with [Museum Bronbeek](<https://app.colonialcollections.nl/nl/research-aids/https%3A%2F%2Fn2t%252Enet%2Fark%3A%2F27023%2F3443ee68039071c8125b16cf2f813f6>) Below you find a brief history of the three museums that fall under the SKD and the collections they manage.

**Marinemuseum Den Helder** The [Marinemuseum] (<http://www.wikidata.org/entity/Q17402020>) in Den Helder (North Holland province) manages the museum collection of the Dutch navy. It was founded in 1962 and is located on the former Willemsoord naval base ever since. In addition to various ships and other navy-related objects, the Marinemuseum's collection also includes objects and collections from a colonial context. In addition to the Marinemuseum, the Dutch navy also manages its own historical collection, known as tradition rooms. To visit the tradition rooms, you must contact the administrator in advance. The [tradition room of the Naval Aviation Service](#) has also made part of its collection available online.

**Mariniersmuseum Rotterdam** The [Mariniersmuseum] (<http://www.wikidata.org/entity/Q2530385>) in Rotterdam manages the collection relating to the history of the Dutch Marine Corps. This army unit has traditionally been part of the navy and is now mainly deployed as a special unit. The Marine Corps has been active in many areas colonised by the Netherlands. This is also reflected in the museum collection. The museum also manages various objects from the period of decolonisation, such as the Indonesian War of Independence.

**Nationaal Militair Museum Soesterberg** The National Military Museum (NMM) in Soesterberg (Utrecht) is a merger of the [Legermuseum](#) (Army Museum) in Delft and the [Militair Luchtvaartmuseum](<http://www.wikidata.org/entity/Q1934808>) (Military Aviation Museum) that was already located in Soesterberg. The merger took place in 2014, when a new museum building was also opened. Since 2023, the former Marechaussee Museum has also been part of the NMM.

The Legermuseum had a long history at several locations and originated from the collection of Dutch military officer [F.A. Hoefer](#). The Militaire Luchtvaart Museum was established in 1968 as the official museum of the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The Marechausseemuseum was established in 1936 and was located in Buren, Gelderland, from 1972 until its closure in 2023. The NMM focuses on the entire history of the Dutch armed forces, with specific attention to the army and air force. The Dutch Air Force also manages its own [historical](#)

[collection](#) in various tradition rooms. Here too, you must contact the administrator in advance to arrange a visit.

[image] *Wall of paintings in the 'treasury' of the Nationaal Militair Museum* ([Nationaal Militair Museum](#))

## Provenance research

The collections of the Mariniersmuseum and the Marinemuseum can both be browsed via the [Maritiem Digitaal](#) website, which also contains the maritime collections of other museums. Due to the large number of objects, it can be difficult to navigate to the desired collection, but you can select a specific museum collection using the “uitgebreid zoeken” option. The [library collection](#) of the Mariniersmuseum is available for public consultation. Please contact the museum for more information.

The collection of the Nationaal Militair Museum can be browsed via its own [collection website](#). The library collection can also be found here.

Archival material relating to the three museums that fall under the Royal Defence Museums Foundation can be found in various inventories of the Ministry of Defence (and its predecessors). When searching for archive material, please note the various former ministries that are now part of the Ministry of Defence. For example, until 1959, there was a Ministry of the Navy during various periods, and the Ministry of Defence was still called the 'Ministry of War'.

## Related Aids

- [Museums and collections](#)
- [Army and navy personnel in colonised territories](#)
- [Museum Bronbeek](#)
- [Hoofdcursus Kampen](#)
- [Volkenkundig Museum Justinus van Nassau](#)

## Primary sources

## Secondary sources

Collection website:

*Nationaal Militair Museum - Collectie Collection website of the National Military Museum. This website allows you to browse the collection managed by the museum in Soesterberg. The Naval and Marine Museums have their own collection websites.*

<https://collectie.nmm.nl/nl/collectie/?ga=2.218030102.1046968903.1660553611-298675809.1660564803&gac=1.837534>

Collection website:

*Maritiem Digitaal Website that brings together the collections of various maritime museums in the Netherlands. The collections of the Marinemuseum in Den Helder and the Mariniersmuseum in Rotterdam can be browsed on Maritiem Digitaal.*

## Relevant Data

TO BE FILLED

*last edited by Wiebe Reints as original\_author on 2025-11-19*