

Program Researchers Day 2026

For many Europeans, war remains a distant reality. For Ukrainian citizens, however, war is a daily lived experience that affects nearly every aspect of life. They have been forced to adapt to this new reality and find means to survive and perhaps even thrive. What can we learn about resilience from those who live in the midst of war?

We present an interdisciplinary programme featuring speakers from both the Netherlands and Ukraine. Their insights regarding the concept resilience will help inform future research priorities and funding calls in the field of veteran care and well-being.

We hope it will create more awareness about fostering resilience in times of war and inspire participating researchers to develop new ideas and collaborations that benefit Dutch, Ukrainian and European veterans and societies in times of peace and conflict.

What Can You Expect?

Prior to the Research Day, there will be an optional lunch, providing an opportunity to meet professional peers and connect. Following lunch, Pieter Hakvoort, Chair of the Veterans Care System Netherlands (LZV), will warmly welcome all participants. Under the guidance of moderator major Hester van Trommel, veteran, current aide de camp to the state secretary of Defense, military psychologist, three esteemed keynote speakers will share their perspectives on resilience.

Dr. Anna Nechai, a Ukrainian interdisciplinary scholar, university professor, psychologist, lawyer, and certified mediator. Anna has a first-hand understanding of institutions and professional communities operating under war pressure, and how to foster psychological support systems for (professional) communities to promote resilience.

Prof. Lesia Vaolevska is director and head of the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament of Ukraine). She holds a Doctor of Laws degree, is a professor, and is the author of more than 150 scholarly works. Her current work focuses on translating knowledge into practical applications, an essential element of innovation in Ukraine. The Research Service provides extensive support to Ukrainian members of parliament by making research and expertise accessible for policy and decision-making.

Peter Peelen, a former chaplain of the Royal Netherlands Navy who served for many years with the Netherlands Marine Corps. As a theologian, he has a particular interest in Byzantine liturgy. He has visited Ukraine and provided training in Kyiv for military chaplains in the final stage of their preparation before deployment to the front. He has

witnessed firsthand the resilience and determination of both the Ukrainian people and military personnel serving on the front lines.

During the coffee break, attendees can explore poster presentations at various locations, showcasing innovative research aimed at enhancing the well-being of veterans and their families. Each researcher will give two six-minute presentations of their work, giving attendees two opportunities to attend each pitch.

After the coffee break, participants will take part in small-group discussions instead of a traditional panel session. These discussions will provide an opportunity to connect with fellow professionals, reflect on the keynote presentations, and explore the implications for their own work. Key takeaways will then be shared with the wider audience in a plenary reflection. Afterwards, participants are invited to continue the conversation over drinks and light refreshments.