

GOLD

A PUBLICATION BY AND FOR THE GOLD CROSS BEARERS

IN THIS ISSUE

Exclusive interview with four mayors

New anniversary badges!

Save the date – powered by spring tour in Leerdam





EMERGENCIE: 06 30 50 56 70
ALLEEN TUSSEN 9.00 EN 21.00 UUR

Board

Ir. Frans Leijtens (Voorzitter)
 Michael Kors (Secretaris)
 Dauphine Noordanus (Penningmeester)
 Lisette Melisse (Ledenadministratie)
 Rino Hamelink
 Jaimy Pieterse
 Fred Kruijer

Secretariat

Michael Kors
 Raadhuissteeg 6
 7201 DJ Zutphen
 E-mail: secretaris@goudenkruisdragers.nl

Treasurer

Dauphine Noordanus
penningmeester@goudenkruisdragers.nl
 BIC-code: INGBNL2A
 IBAN-code: NL70 INGB 0000375702
 t.n.v. Gouden-Kruisdragers Vierdaagse

Member administration

Lisette Melisse
 Burgemeester Reijndersstraat 31
 4761 TX Zevenbergen
 E-mail:
ledenadministratie@goudenkruisdragers.nl

Online

www.goudenkruisdragers.nl
www.facebook.nl/groups/goudenkruisdragers

Content

Foreword	3
Brief News	4
GKD Anniversary Awards	5
Powered by GKD Leerdam, March 14	6
Gold Medallists Reunion	7
Breda, Saturday, September 27	8
Stage Location, Celebration, or Stress...?	10
Members' Meeting April 11, 2026	14
IVV - Europiade, Bütgenbach, Belgium	15
Jubilee rewards ceremony	18
Jubilees	19
Christmas in Groesbeek	20
Anniversary Badge / In Memoriam	24

Honorary Members

Dr. Francien van den Heuvel
 Francie de Leeuw-de Bruijn
 Prof. mr. Henny Sackers
 Arjan Versteeg
 Leonie Vink MA

Member of Merit

Gien Langen-van Kolck
 Vicky Henriksen-Delaney MA
 Gerard Aarts
 Marcel Claassen
 Harry van Dijk
 Ed Hendriks

Ambassadors

Eiji Takemoto (Asia-Pacific)
 Michael Goedeke (D)
 Tue Henriksen (Scandinavië)
 Katrien Delanote (B, Fr)
 Marge Petronis (USA)
 Hans Rennie (UK)
 Sune Keller (Zwitserland)
 Jurg Tschabold (Zwitserland)

Contact Editorial staff

Jaimy Pieterse
 Fred Kruijer
 Henk Rutten
 Finie Groenewoud
 Peter Berends
 E-mail: redactie@goudenkruisdragers.nl

Goud! is een uitgave van de Vereniging Gouden-Kruisdragers Vierdaagse.
 The Association of Gold Medallists is founded on 24 July 1951 and approved by royal decree
 d.d. 24 July 1952, no. 46

Foreword by the Chairman

Dear Golden-Cross bearers,

While the world around us isn't always the most friendly place, I am always glad if I can walk with our members and other walkers. So I met many of you in Breda for the Markdalwalk 'powered by GKD' and during the reunion that took place around the old town centre of Ginneken. The good mood, beautiful stories and many friendships we cherish from the fourdays marches were all there. Fortunately we will not have to wait till the holidays to enjoy our togetherness and cosiness

The Markdalwalk was our second to last activity this year, but of course your board keeps on working. We

get acquainted with our new candidate-boardmembers, prepare a togetherness about the multi-year plan for the informal meetings with the 'Stichting de 4 daagse' Besides this we have a nice 'powered by GKD' walk coming up in Emmen. For next year we are looking for the next beautiful locations for our 'powered by GKD' walks; in Ouwerkerk (Zeeland) we are most welcome in the summer

Our cooperation with the 4-days marches and KWbN is good. We have a financially healthy association which we can provide with new modernized articles of association, boardmembers and volunteers in 2026. We hope to award one of our first bronze 'powered by GKD' pin to one of you and we hope to be able to give a lot of lustrum rewards in September. I wish all of you a beautiful and peaceful year and of course a very merry Christmas!

Frans Leijtens
Chairman



GKD anniversary shirt – almost there!

Our association will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2026 (hurray!). We will mark this occasion with a unique anniversary shirt! Details on the design and the ordering procedure will soon follow in our newsletter, which will be sent to you by email. Is your email address still not known to us? Please send it to us! Are you not able to receive emails? Let us know and we will make sure that you will receive the newsletter anyway.

Flag Parade 2026 – will you be joining us?

Also in 2026, our association will shine bright at the Flag Parade on the afternoon of Sunday, July 19th, the Sunday before the start of the 4Days Marches! The parade will follow the same route as previous years: start in Westerpark, through the Waterkwartier area and the city center, and a finish at the Wedren for the official opening by the March Leader.

We want to participate with a large group of at least 40 members, who will carry our flags and association banners. Let us together show who we are! If possible, try to wear our association shirt – and good news: the new anniversary shirt is coming!

Would you like to walk with us? You can already register via rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdragers.nl. More information on the shirt and an extra call for the parade will soon follow by email.

Change in our magazine

In order to keep our magazine lively and readable, we will not publish the summary of the minutes the General Members Meeting any longer. The full minutes are to be found on our website.

New: GKD emergency number

From now on, there is an emergency number available for urgent questions, for example when email is not working or when you just have a quick question. Please call only between 09:00 and 21:00 (Nijmegen time) and only if the issue cannot be solved otherwise – in that way we will keep things manageable for our volunteers. Is the call not answered? Please leave a message by voicemail and we'll call you back as soon as possible.

Emergency number: **+31 6 3050 5670** (also to be found in the colophon of this magazine).





Best photo with the inflatable

At the members meeting, the Monday before the 4-days marches, the 'Inflatable' was put on display. It is a blow-up logo that would be placed along the route at our meetingpoint. The chairman called upon all the members to send in your best and most beautiful photo with the inflatable. Thanks in advance for sharing your nice photo's. A jury from this magazine's redaction chose this photo

GKD quintennial jubilee rewards

In GOUD! you will find a list of our members who celebrate a five-year jubilee for their participations in the 4Days Marches.

This year, the 4Daagse Foundation has checked the 4Daagse registration numbers, the KWBN numbers and the combination name + date of birth. There might be a small chance that all of these data are not available or correct. If the data in our association's administration do not match those in the 4Daagse administration, then the member could, of course, not be identified as jubilee walker. We are not able to change this, unfortunately.

Some members have simply been registered at our association with their birth names, while they are known to the 4Daagse registration by their married names - or vice versa. We hope to have already solved a number of these cases by a recent check on KWBN numbers and 4Daagse registration numbers.

For next year, we would like to have every member's 4Daagse registration number. That would make it much easier to do the check, and it will ensure that we don't overlook anyone. The only issue that still could arise then, is members having sent the wrong 4Daagse registration number to GKD, which would make it impossible for us to find a match.

So, if you are walking for the 15th, 20th, 25th etc. time and you want to receive a five-year jubilee reward, then you should pass on your 4Daagse registration number to GKD via the website

<https://www.goudenkruisdragers.nl/wp/lustrumbeloning/>

'Powered-by GKD' 2026

Leerdam, 14 March

Our association does not organize its own walks, but every year we 'adopt' a number of walks scattered over the country. In this way, we try to support the organizing walking club by generating extra attention on the walk. This also enables us to promote our association and to offer our members the suitable occasion to meet outside the third week of July. After registration by email, participation in the Powered-by walks is paid for by the association.

For the coming six months, the March walk of Prins Bernard Walking Club in Leerdam has been put on the calendar by our association. This walk will be held on 14th March in the city of Leerdam. There is a choice of various distances: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 km.

The city of Leerdam sits on the river Linge, surrounded by orchards – but unfortunately it will be too early in March to see the blossoms. Leerdam is also known as the 'glass city': there is a glass museum with a glassworks, which is a nice idea for those who walk the shorter distances.

You can register for a Powered-by walk until one week before the walk by sending an email to rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdragers.nl. Please state clearly your name, address, data of birth and the distance of your choice.



Moreover, a stamp card for these walks was introduced a number of years ago. After collecting five stamps, you will receive a bronze pin from our association and after ten stamps a silver one. These stamp cards are available at the organizing walking club on the day of the walk. The cards will be stamped by the organizing walking club.

The next walk in 2026 will be the Krekentoct at the Watersnoodmuseum (flood disaster museum) in the village of Ouwerkerk in the Zeeland province. More information will be available in the next edition of GOUD!.



Gold Medallists Reunion

27 september 2025

Report written by Peter Berends

It takes quite a long time to travel from Utrecht to Ginneken in the morning, so I spent the night before the reunion in a hotel at the market square of the town of Breda, with a view on the church.

I arrived at the reunion on time, due to the city's good bus transport. But it took me some walking after the bus ride, because the location, Boerke Verschuren pub at Ginnekenmarkt, is really located in a remote corner of the town; this offers, on the other hand, also some benefits. Ginnekenmarkt is a triangular market square, typical for the province of Brabant. And Boerke is a typical Brabantic pub, with a large room in the back and a classic interior in dark wood.

After I had come in, I was able to experience another Brabantic tradition: sausage rolls – the famous Brabantic 'worstenbroodjes' – were being served alongside the coffee. At 11 o'clock there was a welcoming speech by the Chair, Frans Leijtens. He brought some good news: the number of members had increased and the association's PR had been improved. He also told the story of how Breda tried to become the 4Days Marches town. The city saw an opportunity after the Second World War, but Nijmegen tried everything it could to keep the event. Everybody knows the outcome.

After that, I made a short walk along Duivelsbruglaan and back. I liked it that it was only a short distance from the village square to the



start of the 'Powered-by-GKD' walk, and to two nature areas: the valley of the river Mark and the Mastbos forest.

After the lunch, two guides from volunteer organization 'het Gilde' stood ready to offer us a guided tour through Ginneken village (which is also called 't Ginneke'). The village was founded as a small settlement on the river Mark. The Duivelsbrug bridge was built in 1611, but in the Middle Ages there was a ford for horses and carriages at that place. Pubs and inns followed soon, and there were also many smallholdings and farms in the area. The first Saint Laurens Church was built around 1200, on farmland that was ceded by the Thorn domain, which fell under an abbey. Ginneken became an autonomous parish after a secession from the Gilze parish.

In 1637, during the 80-year war (1568-1648; between the Netherlands and Spain), Breda fell definitely into the hands of the Republic of the Netherlands. As a consequence, the church became protestant and catholics had to use clandestine churches until 1795. In that year, the French occupiers announced the equality of all religions.

In the nineteenth century, the rise in tourism started a boom period. Several hotels were built on the river Mark. A catholic Sint Laurens Church was built as well, finalized in 1902. More houses were built, in various styles: Jugendstil, Amsterdam School and Delft School. The village of Ginneken was annexed by Breda in 1942.

After the walk it was time to have a drink. Our chairman gave a small speech again, after which the five-year jubilee rewards were handed out. One of the members had even achieved the number of 50 participations in the 4Days Marches! A special jubilee album had been created for her. At the end we were able to stay and talk a bit longer, before we left for home.

Report on Saturday 27th September in Breda

Report written by Ms. Finie Groenewoud



This walk was organized by W.I.E.G.O walking club and promoted by our GKD association, so I went there to make a report. It was the 54th edition of the walk, called Markdaltocht (walk in the valley of the river Mark).

It took more than one hour of driving from my home, so I got up early in order to arrive in Breda on time. The start was at 9.00 hours, after all. There was a large parking area close to the start where you could park for free. From there it was only a short walk to the start location. The start location was a kind of community center, called 'Meriëndel'.

It was not very crowded at the registration this time. I had registered in advance, but I had left my distance open. I had decided that I would be going for the 25 kilometers. The walkers received a route description on paper and the route was marked with square signs:



- YELLOW signs = Left
- RED signs = Right
- WHITE signs = Straight on

The numbers on the signs matched the numbers on the route description. Sometimes the description mentioned a street name, but while we were walking a lot through the forest, which doesn't have street names, orientation was a bit more difficult.

Very soon after the start we arrived in a forest, the Mastbos forest, where we had to keep a close eye on the arrows. In fact, I walked almost all the time with the sheet in my





hand. Sometimes we walked within the town of Breda for a short distance, but every time we returned to the forest after having walked through a few streets. Just before I reached the first resting post, I encountered a woman who walked in the opposite direction. She also took part in the walk; she had just had a break and thought that she had to walk back. The description on the sheet was not very clear however, for after the rest we had to turn left to continue the route.

The first rest was at the De Nijs family; they have a sort of party

room in a shed, where we could have some tasty food and drinks. After that, the route continued through the forest again. The second rest was at Tavern 'Jeugdland' in the village of Ulvenhout. This was a large sports center where we could again have some rest and get some food and drinks. After the break we entered the forest again, towards the start/finish in Breda. We also passed a beautiful castle, which is called the Bouvigne estate; see the picture.

It was great walking weather, partly cloudy, with sunny intervals. I heard different opinions about the route. Some thought the route was beautiful because it ran through the forest for the most part; others found the arrows along the route very confusing with the use the several colors. All in all, it was a beautiful walk.

About 35 members had registered via our GKD association.



Stage on the 4Days Marches, feast or stress...?

Author: Fred Kruijer

Elst, Wijchen, Groesbeek and Cuijk, the stages on the 4Days Marches. Bustle, celebrations, defilés, military dignitaries and of course the mayors with their aldermen and their entourage. But what it takes, to be a stage, how do you organize it and what do have to take into account as municipality? Goud asked it the mayors themselves.

Organization

Marieke Moorman, since two years mayor of Land van Cuijk, says about logistic challenges for stages during the 4Days Marches: "There are multiple domains involved in the organization. Permits, the Field Service, Security, Events, Supervision and Enforcement.

It takes a lot of mutual coordination on forehand. There are forty persons actively involved during the day. Logistically it takes a lot of effort. We need to place six hundred crowd barriers, mobile toilets, drink water, power for all facilities along the course. We clean the course on our territory" A firm job: 'land van Cuijk' contains the communities of Grave, Linden, Beers and Vianen.

Patricia Hoytink-Roubos, mayor of Elst - municipality Overbetuwe – sees the 4Days Marches not as a challenge: "The walkers have been visiting Elst for a long time and we keep our scripts up to date. The replacement of police by traffic controllers took some time but it did go well. We grant permits, we place toilets and crowd barriers, but our civil servants and services have done that for many years. We have multiple stage towns in our municipality, Oosterhout, Valburg and finally Elst. I am present during the day in these stage towns."

The two corona years and the 'blue Tuesday in 2022', then as result of the heat, are still considered as a loss. Hoytink: "These were disappointments for everyone, especially for the people in the villages who



Marieke Moorman



Patricia Hoytink-Roubos van Elst



Renske Helmer Engelbert

look forward to it the year round and put a lot of work into the preparations. In the meantime we have more than made up for it."

Since 2022 **Renske Helmer Englebert** is mayor of stage town Wijchen, that includes communities Alverna, Balgoij and Niftrik, and where as in Elst all distances pass through. "We deploy not only traffic-controllers but also enforcers. We inspect the whole course on our territory for holes in the asphalt, that will be repaired at the spot. We have recently adjusted the courses to the center of town to relieve pressure at the bottleneck from Markt to Kasteellaan. We have relocated the parade platform to the town hall, to enable the walkers on the thirty kilometer, that bypass the Kasteellaan voluntary, to parade as well."

Crowd barriers, traffic controllers



Mark Slinkman

and enforcement are the matters that **Mark Slinkman**, mayor of Groesbeek, mentions first. Slinkman: "The big challenge is the Zevenheuvelenweg, that resorts under the municipality for the part till Berg en Dal. There is not only an incredible number of campers but also parts of trucks with music and dancing Groesbekers of a number of small carnival associations. That is splendid but it requires a strong organization and enforcement to get and keep thing under control along the course. It always happens in perfect harmony."

Traffic controllers

The 4Days Marches are decentralized in many aspects. Services as the police have withdrawn themselves from traffic control. Marieke Moorman van Cuijk: "The traffic controllers that have taken over are not only paid but need to be instructed since this year."

Mark Slinkman, Groesbeek: "We are involved in taking over enforcement and traffic tasks from the police. The police has less possibilities and we think it is important to keep the march going through our municipality. We would have liked a larger role for the police in Groesbeek. We have an incredible number of road closures with traffic controllers but for all events – not only the 4Days Marches – holds that respect for traffic controller is different as for a police officer. We see a particular hardening in mentality, people say: 'I need to pass' And of course, aid in emergencies is always present, but

response times in our large area are naturally larger. Traffic controllers face unnecessary difficulties but we do not want to lose them.”

The interest of the pass-through

Anyone that has a pass-through of the 4Days Marches in its municipality, likes to keep it at all costs. What is so important about it? Moorman: “First of all it is a large celebration in Cuijk with a lot of fun that attracts a lot of people. You put your municipality in the spotlight. Without the 4Days Marches we miss not only a great event but also a certain source of income. Fortunately, we have signed a longlasting contract with the 4Days Marches organization this year. The 4Days Marches are an event that fits the profile of our municipality, as there happens to be a lot of walking all year round.” Mayor Renske Helmer of Wijchen says that the 4Days Marches contribute to the identity of Wijchen: “That holds also for the communities of Balgoij, Alverna and Niftrik. The inhabitants are enormously dedicated.”

And Mark Slinkman of Groesbeek: “Of course it is important for Groesbeek and Berg en Dal. We are a small municipality but when you mention Groesbeek in the province of Zeeland, everyone says: ‘de Zevenheuvelenweg’. We have a lot of camping’s and hotels. The experience of the 4Days Marches would be different without the day of Groesbeek and its hilly landscape.” Patrick Hoytink of Elst: “I care a lot about the moment of proudness. For the inhabitants as well as the entrepreneurs, when you notice what is organized to make it a feast. It is good for the feeling of solidarity. And of course it will be good for the hospitality sector, though the walkers pass quite early. Municipalities with a pass-through later during the day will have full terraces.” This is the case in Cuijk. There is not only good business on the marching days but also all other days because of the 4Days Marches Festival. In Groesbeek and Wijchen that is different.

Mark Slinkman: “We are too close to Nijmegen to organize our own festival.” This holds also for Wijchen. On Tuesday night the 4Days marches orchestra plays, free for all inhabitants. Renske Helmer: “What we do, is to make sure that Wijchen turns pink on pink Wednesday. Mayor and alderman are pre-

sent that day, fully dressed in pink. And that is a must, as pink Wednesday is a feast of solidarity and diversity. I see that the freedom we have achieved, is increasingly being cut back, and in countries where we never thought it would happen. It is not just fun to do. Pink Wednesday is simply a message.” In Elst they have a party. Every year, on Monday the ‘Night of Elst’ is held. A beautiful feast and a private initiative.

Municipalities and the 4Days Marches organization

Marieke Moorman from Cuijk answers in more detail on the question how the responsibilities and statutory power are divided between the organising office of the 4Days Marches organization and the municipality: “The 4Days Marches organization determines the course that walkers should walk. Therefore, we have a meeting of coordinators with the 4Days Marches organization twice a year. In March in preparation of, and in October to evaluate the 4Days Marches. There is in my competence, Public Order and Security, a yearly security-meeting. The 4Days Marches are a C-event, the highest security risk. Fortythousand people walk across a relatively small area. The people themselves are not dangerous, but matters as extreme heat, fast changing weatherconditions like thunder or enormous showers. If, for whatever reason, panic in the crowd arises, our plans are actually ready. Where emergency services



go to. On and off routes, where injured must go, it is all present in the script and written down in separate protocols. Two years ago we have decided at instigation of the 4Days Marches organization, that monitors the weather during the march, to close the pontoon bridge earlier because of an enormous thunderstorm crossing the Land van Cuijk. The rain is already terrible, but you won't think about a lightning strike at a steel pontoon bridge filled with walkers. It was late in the afternoon but we had to disappoint a lot of walkers. That is a decision we make, but by agreement with the office of the 4Days Marches organization and the engineering regiment."

Mark Slinkman of Groesbeek is satisfied with the mutual cooperation. "The 4Days Marches organization watches the 4Days Marches with a 'blue eye' since the attendance of Pim Miltenburg – former chief of police Gelderland Midden. It is a long running organization that discusses in a beautiful and traditional manner. It is important to them that the rules are globally the same for all four days and for all stages and municipalities. The tenor is always: how are we going to do this and it is a good attitude. We can put everything on the agenda that we like to see being changed or improved"

And at what cost?

Of course we ask what the costs are. Mayor Moorman states that costs for the municipality Land van Cuijk comes in two ways: "Naturally our man hours, the hiring of traffic controllers and the rent for crowd barriers and toilets. Furthermore, it is one big party that starts Tuesday with stages and bands.



The people organize and we facilitate. We get promotion in return on radio and TV, it is good for Cuijk, but we like to give our inhabitants and passing walkers a beautiful time." Mayor Slinkman does not have an answer: "I don not know because we do not calculate everything for the 4Days Marches only. We place crowd barriers for other events as well. We budget necessary costs yearly for Municipal works, basically our field service and we do not specify what is used for the 4Days Marches." Mayor Hoytink of Elst can specify what the 4Days Marches cost. "In 2024 the total costs were about €50,000. The major part was to support initiatives in the communities and the deployment of traffic controllers. Furthermore budget was spent to acquire blue tuesdayshirts for walkers of Overbetuwe and catering during the reception on Tuesday."

Membersmeeting 11 april 2026

We invite the members for the General Members Meeting on Saturday 11 april 2026/. The location of the meeting is D'Almarasweg 22b, 6525DW Nijmegen. The meeting starts at 2:00 pm and takes about an hour.

The board proposes the following agenda:

1. Opening
2. Received documents and announcements by the board
3. Minutes General Members meeting 14 july 2025
4. Annual report by the board over 2025
 - a. Report from Secretary
 - b. Report from Treasurer
5. Report financial committee
6. Appointment financial committee
7. Budget 2027 and approval membership fee
8. Election of the board
9. Approval new statutes and by-laws
10. (Other) Proposals of the board
11. Any other business
12. Closure

Explanation on agenda:

Ad 4. and 7. The documents of these points shall be available at a later moment but at least three weeks before the meeting.

Ad 6. The financial committee consisted of members Joke Poppe, Martin Pegels, Jos Knooff and alternate member Rob Alblas during 2025. The board will propose the composition of the financial committee for 2026 before the general members meeting.

Ad 7. The board proposes to maintain the membership fee of Euro 13.50 , increased with possible remittance to KWBN, in 2027

Ad 8. Frans Leijters, Rino Hamelink and Michael Kors are eligible for re-election for another term as a board member.

The board expects to announce a candidate for an open position ahead to the meeting. Every other member that proposes to be a candidate for this position, should announce its candidacy to the board in writing at least 30 minutes before the meeting, accompanied by at least ten autographs from voting members.

The board aims to close the meeting near 3 o'clock.



IVV Europiad 2026 Bütgenbach, Belgium

Author Fred Kruijer



A brief look back

The last edition of GOUD! went exhaustively into the two worldwide walking associations, the International Marching League (IML) and the International Federation of Popular Sports (IVV), although the latter does not limit itself to walking. The sports that feature at its large international events include cycling and swimming, and sometimes even more sports.

There are 27 countries in the world where a walk with IML status is organized every year. In three countries, the US, China and Japan, there are two walks that count as IML walk. IVV organizes only a few large events, every time in another country. At such occasions, there is also cooperation with the IML, like last summer in Finland. In that country the regular IML-walk was organized in Vaasa in the beginning of august, as the first event. Almost 500 people from 24 countries participated in the event. The weekend after that, the IVV Olympiad was held in the city of Tampere. Also here, 24 countries were represented, but the total number of participants was 1.100, so more than double the number of Vaasa. You might

therefore tentatively conclude that, in this international context, the IVV is more popular than the IML, although this relation is very different in the Netherlands, rather the other way around. More on that later.

East Cantons of Belgium

The Belgian East Cantons, the name already indicates so, are located in the country's eastern quarter, against the border with Germany. It is a green belt of 11 municipalities, roughly from south of the German city of Aken to the Luxembourg border at the village of Ouren, so between two triple border points. Currently, this region consists of three cantons. In the cantons Eupen (4 municipalities) and Sankt-Vith

(5 municipalities), the main language is German. In the canton Malmédy (2 municipalities), the inhabitants speak mostly French. Because of the beautiful nature and hills, it is a sparsely populated area. Less than 100.000 people (4/5 German speaking and 1/5 French speaking) are living on a surface of around 1.050 square kilometers. For those who are good at math: the population density is less than 100 inhabitants per square kilometer. For comparison: the population density for Belgium as a whole is around 385 inhabitants per square kilometer; in the Netherlands that number is around 422 inhabitants per square kilometer.

The history of the region has been turbulent. The East Cantons were annexed by the Kingdom of Prussia after the fall of Napoleon in 1815, and with that they became a part of Germany until the First World War. At the end of this 'Great War', as it

is called by our neighbors in the south, the Belgians demanded the return of the area as compensation and retaliation, although this idea was not shared by all political parties. Nevertheless, this demand was agreed to in the Treaty of Versailles at the Paris peace conference in 1919. Since then, the East Cantons have been part of Belgium. This period was of course interrupted during the Second World War when Nazi Germany took control of Belgium by brute force.

The East Cantons form a transitional zone between the Ardennes region and the Eiffel region, and are located in the highest part of Belgium. The peak is Signal de Botrange on 694 meters above sea level, and, taking into account the stone stairs, this is even 700 meters... This region also includes the oldest cross-border nature reserve of the country: the Hoge Venen. This area includes the Bütgenbach municipality, among others.

IVV Europiad 2026 Bütgenbach

Bütgenbach is located in the Sankt-Vith canton and has around 5.500 inhabitants. The village of Worriken is a church village, part of the Bütgenbach municipality. This is the location where the 8th IVV Olympiad will be organized from Wednesday June 10th until Saturday June 14th. As mentioned in the last edition of GOUD!, Europiads usually take place in a border region of two countries that are IVV members. This has been the case since the first edition in Echternach





(LU) and Irrel (DE) in 2012. The 8th Europiad will surely cross the border by bike, on Thursday June 11th, for example to the German city of Monschau, a tourist destination that also attracts many visitors from the Netherlands. On Saturday June 13th, the participants in the longest walking distance, 50 kilometers, will reach Signal de Botrange – mentioned above. So, they will not only have to face many kilometers, but also many leg killers. For the full program, see: <https://www.ivv-europa.eu/english/ivv-europiads/> You can download the flyer, which is available in English.

Conclusion

The 20th IVV Olympiad will be held in Luxembourg in 2027, also in the month of June. So, it seems that, by organizing these two special events, the two smallest Benelux countries are very active IVV members. These events are wonderful opportunities, at a close distance, to get to know the IVV. Moreover, they are very good training opportunities for the 4Days Marches that will take place one month later. Unfortunately, the interest in the IVV has flagged considerably in the Netherlands for the last years. It is high time to turn the tide. Our association of Gold Medallists is actively involved in this; plans are being made to breathe new life into IVV Netherlands. We do not live on an island, quite the contrary. The Netherlands has over 1.000 kilometers of land borders. In 1989, the first IVV Olympiad took place in the beautiful sloping landscape of the town of Valkenburg in the Limburg province. How wonderful would it be if another great IVV event – and at the same time IML event – could be organized in our little wet country in the near future.



Jubilee rewards ceremony

We would like to congratulate you all on your jubilee reward!

Those attending the reunion in Breda already received their rewards, the other rewards were sent by mail.

If you have not received a jubilee reward, but you should have got one this year?

Apologies! Please, could you send us an email? We will make sure you will receive your jubilee reward and update our administration.



*Congratulation
on your lustrum award!*

*Glückwunsch
mit Deine
Jahrfünftbelohnung!*



Jubilees

15X

Hans van den Mark, Erik Arts, Frank Bartelds, Marion Blok Scherpenhuysen, Barbara van den Bosch, Aletta Bulsink-Doosje, Cornelis Kees van der Burgh, Constantin Carp, John Colde-wijn, Wilma Coppoolse, Rob Cremers, Yvonne Geuke, Frits Grijsen, Mirjam Groot, Nadine Harlingen, Franny Hilgersom, Wim Houtjes, Michael Hugger, Bert Janssen, Peter Janssen, Frans Jirka, Arnoud Jordan, Martin Kelder, Wim Kimenai, Janneke Kistemaker, Rene de Koeijer, Albert Kuypers, Frank Linssen, Marion Oosterlee-van Oosten, Ruud Persoon, Truus Pest, Christel Peters, Jos Peters, Peter Pieters, Rudolph Rijks, Albert Rossum, Ad van de Sande, Natasja Scheerder, Eije Schmaal, Jan Schroder, Kai Tan, Angela Teeuwsen-van Hees, Geert-Jan Thijssen, Jose Voet, Caroline Vollebregt, Cees Zeeland, Jannie van der Zwan-Vellekoop, Louise van Esch, Bert Arts, Bertus Overeem, Kees Veerhoek.

20X

Ionka Brundel-Steenbeek, Rinus de Heus, Marco Angevare, Claudius Cambier, Katrien Delanote, Martin Dijkhuijsen, Piet van Dikken-berg, Janine Dolfing, Ans Duin-Schweitzer, Antoinette Eijkemans, Ans Elferink-te Brake, Gerard van Gorkum, Willy Griffioen-Lam, Sonja van Haastrecht-Schoo, Leo Hanse, Anneke Heethuis, Cesar Hoekstra, Ans Huis-man, Tonnie Keurtjes, Monika Kleiboehmer, Koos Kok, Karin Kolvoort, Henk Michels, Kari Oey, Rene Papenhoven, Lucie Peelen-Bugter, Linda Petersen-van Hest, Piet Philipse, Henk Sieben, Robert Tournay, Luc Vergeer, Frans Verhees, Ton Vosters, Frans Vlaar, Philip Hol Craanen, Megeb van Karin.

25X

Dhr. H. van Dijk, Loes van Bremen, William Chapman, Dhr. H.J. Diekerhof, Harry Eckhardt, Dhr. D.U.C. Eras, Dhr. A.C. Fokker, Dhr. M. Francke, Arthur Furrer, John Kouters, Ed Krijger, Mevr. A.M.E. Kuhlmann, Anita Kwant, Dhr. J.A.J. Laheij, Theo Loeters, Bart Lutke Schipholt, Peter Moerland, Gijs Nijhuis, Gerrit Riezebos, Marcel Slavenburg, Lia van der

Steen, Dhr. J. Tol, Wiljan Vels, Linda Verkerk, Antoinet Winkel-Groot.

30X

Wim den Dekker, Remco Glasbergen, Jos Knooff, Dhr. C.H. Kuvener, Mevr. C.B. Mason-Kikendall, Henk Peperkamp, Mevr. C.J. Ruijs-van Nuland, Dhr. J.M.M. Simons, Piet Sluijs, Dhr. J.J. Thiele, Gonnie Tielemans, Arjan Versteeg, Klaus Zaepke, Dhr. A.C. Zuidema.

35X

Lambert Bus, Ineke Caerteling.

40X

Bart Peters, Ben Princen, Annemarie Termaat.

45X

Willie Hendriksen-Damen.

50X

Carla Kersten.

55X

Dhr. P.J. Kenniphaas.



Christmas in Groesbeek

Door: Fred Kruijer

The young lieutenant of the Canadian 425 Tactical Fighter squadron didn't like it at all. Short after his officers- and his flying training he was appointed lieutenant-flyer, but immediately thereafter he was assigned to the function of platoon commander of a staffplatoon by his squadron commander. This staffplatoon walked the 4-days marches of Nijmegen every year since the beginning of the cold war. His colleagues laughing their butts off called him by his new assigned call-sign 'walker'. He wasn't pleased at all.

His somewhat mocking platoon of administrators and maintenance people – besides him never a pilot had taken part in the marches- was getting ready for the seven hills of Groesbeek at the second last military rest-area on the 3rd day of the 4-days marches.

There he would, with his platoon, bring the honorary military salute to the Canadian soldiers at the war cemetery, this was situated at top of the second large hill on the route. The soldiers resting there had fallen in Germany and the south of the Netherlands during the last year of WW II during operation Veritable. The salute is a 4-days tradition.

The other military 4-days detachments of the NATO countries, with the exception of the Germans of cause, took part of the ceremony every year.

It's all part of the game he philosophically thought.

It was warm. The men and women in his platoon thought it was hot. He thought they weren't accustomed to much. Here at the large resting place they got fed and refreshed, especially refreshed. He smiled when he opened his ice cold can of coke with his middle finger and swallowed the contents in one big gulp. He didn't worry about this job. In the Saudi Arabian desert a great international coalition gathered to chase that son of a b.... Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

When it would escalate into a war, the Canadian airforce would take part in the fighting. He had already received his marching orders for 1 September 1990. Half of September he would fly his CF-18 Hornet to the Middle East. For the real job...!

The parish church of the Saints Cosmas and Damianus in Groesbeek was like every year at Christmas eve full of people for the traditional nightmass.

The three pastors of the church had done a lot of overtime and the church was more than in the other years filled with an almost tangible Christmas spirit.

The weather contributed a lot to all of this. After decades of a cold, rainy Christmas this year has brought a thick layer of snow. There was more than 20 centimeters (i.e. 8 inches) of snow and Groesbeek is not a top priority for the countries snowplows

The little village at the German border looked this evening a lot like a three-dimensional Christmas card. At the end of the day the temperature had plunged and the wet air that formed the snow was altered into the dry freezing air that showed a bright shining star heaven



above the white hills around the villages Groesbeek, Bredeweg and Berg en Dal.

The churchgoers were enchanted by the blueish-white nightcolour of the untouched snow. In the church it was cold. That cold air made the voices crystal clear, the voice of the priest that was celebrating the night mass and above all the voices of the choir. At the end of the mass traditionally the hymn 'silent night Holy night' was sung, the churchgoers sang along, softly. And in that church heaven the multi voice was heard as a mystic echo that hovered over the heads to made even the Mother Mary cry in the utmost corner of the church.

It also brought tears in the eyes of an old gentleman, at the very far end of the church. He didn't understand Dutch, but therefore he was not derived from the beauty of the voices that penetrated deeply in his soul and this transcendent the lack of knowledge of the Dutch-language. Eighteen years he loyally came to the Netherlands, for a long time together with his wife. Always in the summer. At the beginning of the 3rd week of July, right before the 4-days marches of Nijmegen.

The ritual was always the same; Saturday afternoon arriving at Schiphol Airport, then by train, through Arnhem to Nijmegen and then check-in the reasonable but not to expensive hotel in the town center.

Sunday morning to the 4-days mass in the Saint Stevens-church in the center of Nijmegen. A walk to the river Waal, a drink at a terrace and an evening diner in town. Monday registering and then 4 days of walking, always together. He never walked the obligatory 50 Km for gentlemen, it was too far for his wife and walking 40 Km together was more important than the gold plated medal where all the other walkers were pressing their limits so much. His wife, of cause got the medal, but he didn't even know where she kept them, and she didn't wear them either!

Later when he just got 50, the 40 Km became too heavy for his wife and they walked the 30 Km route. Till she was admitted to the hospital in Quebec 4 years ago, she had stomach and intestinal complaints. Research didn't give a conclusion, but her body didn't function anymore. Two weeks later she passed away. On Christmas eve. The doctors told him that she was completely worn out inside, in short, they didn't know what the cause was. But he knew. She didn't want to live anymore for a long time but she prolonged her life just for him. Now there was no strength for that anymore.

Another three years he walked the 4-days marches of Nijmegen alone, although his little income was just enough to do so. Earlier times that was a log easier, she had always worked together with him, at a certain time even full-time. But there was no widowers pension, and life became more and more expensive. Still he loyally came to Nijmegen, just like he promised her. Till the doctors of the same hospital in Quebec told him in September that he had been smoking



far too long. In his case they *dí*d know what was wrong. His lungs had been affected too long and the disease had spread. And this was the reason why he, for the last time, this year he travelled to the Netherlands. Now to spend his Christmas in Groesbeek because according to his doctors he wouldn't make the next 4-days marches.

But when he walked out of the church he felt great since months. The cold freezing air caressed his hurt lungs and gave him extra oxygen. He had been exhausted for weeks and he lived for the major part on pills. Pills to prevent hemorrhages and morphine tablets. The journey to Holland had worn him out completely, and this morning he gave up blood again in spite of the medication. But tonight it was different, it wasn't that the pain had disappeared but he felt more energetic than he had felt for years. Maybe it was because of the low temperatures, or because of the mass, he just didn't know why. He wanted to walk back to his hotel in Groesbeek but without thinking he made a left turn and walked out of the village very quietly, into the star spangled night.

Right at the edge of the village he saw the first hill of the road to Berg en Dal and Nijmegen, the seven hills road. Above the white hills with the dark woods the night was shining blue underneath the light of the stars and the small sickle of the moon. There was no wind. The freezing cold and the thick layer of snow seemed to take away all sound and silenced the true world in which he was the only respectful moving person.

He almost felt like a young man when he made his first steps up the hill, but he had become an old wreck when he reached the top of the first but steep hill. His head was bouncing, and his heart was beating furiously. His old broken lungs couldn't deliver the oxygen his body so dearly needed.

Every muscle in his legs acidified, he felt fierce stings in his side, he felt dizziness of tiredness and he was nauseous of pain. But when he wanted to turn around he saw above the

bold tops of the trees a little light that moved fast flashing in the direction of Nijmegen. He wasn't crazy, and not gullible. He knew that it could have been the star of Bethlehem and in the best case the comet of Halley or the flashing beacon of an airliner. But he didn't return and started walking very slowly in the direction of the little light that had already disappeared in the meanwhile.

Halfway the second hill, the pain was dragging black lines through his existence and destroyed his last thoughts. He gasped and cried, he couldn't go any further and he couldn't stop. He did the only thing he still could do. He took 2 morphine pills from the strip in his jacket, one more than he normally would take, and swallowed them. He leaned against a tree to rest for a while, but he felt the cold creeping up to him and he staggered, five minutes later, a little bit further awaiting the warm numbness that could come up to him. Unexpectedly he found himself at the top of the second hill. He looked around him and saw to the left of him the white greens of the Groesbeek golfclub. But he went to the right and walked up the short way to the entrance of the Canadian military burial place. The morphine probably started



working. He felt no more pain and was not cold anymore.

The burial field was lit softly, right in front of him he saw, gracefully silent in the soft moonlight, rows and rows of white snow covered tombs, formed in platoons in front of the white stone cross with the black iron sword on it with which the Commonwealth protects her resting soldiers all over the world.

He looked at the tombs for a moment but he immediately walked to the Groesbeek Memorial that he and his wife had visited all those years at the 3rd day of the 4-days marches of Nijmegen. The memorial consists of 2 column galleries on both sides of the path leading to the burial fields.

In the white marble walls the names are carved of the Canadian soldiers that have given their lives in 1945 around Nijmegen and Groesbeek and of which the bodies had not been retrieved or identified.

The name of his son wasn't amongst those names, his only child was shot down in a cold November night flying his Hornet when returning from an attack on targets in Baghdad.

A coincidental hit of the anti-aircraft gun that randomly shot in the air. There had been no grave for his child. The body was never returned. Therefore the Groesbeek Memorial had been their place of pilgrimage, because Nijmegen had been the last foreign place of which their son had returned. His wife and he knew that he had been here on the third day of the 4-days marches with his platoon, to salute his fallen comrades.

Now it was Christmas eve and he stood before the memorial again. The

white wall was lit softly and he saw that his son's name was on it now, in golden letters. He was not surprised, as it didn't surprise him that he saw a young man and an older woman, calm he walked up to them.

A young farmer found him the next morning and called the police. The officer that came found the old gentleman on the path of the seven hills road, halfway the second hill about 200 meters (220 yards) away from the side road to the Canadian military honor field. Stiffened by the freezing cold and rigor mortis.

In consultation with her operational center she asked for a medical examiner, the chief inspector didn't come over because nothing gave the impression of a criminal act. The old man lay relaxed at his back on the snowy path, his arms were spread out and his eyes smiled at the wintry sky.

Lustrumbadge

Since a number of years the board receives questions about the possibility to order a lustrumbadge. This has not been able till now. There is just one badge of the association that everyone receives at the start of the membership. And there are lustrumrewards.

We have looked into this matter. A design is chosen that is in line with the standard badge with a number in the middle. This number is a little larger as the heart of the original badge and the different lustres have different colors. See photo. Thus, you can see from a distance, if the badge is put on your backpack, which lustrum the badge is about (without being able to read the number). The contribution for the badges is Euro 7.50 per piece, exclusive possible shipping costs. Since the production of these badges won't be cheap, we like to make an assessment of interest.

We will have the badges produced when interest is substantial. If you have interest in these badges please send a mail



with a mention of badge/lustrum to
rino.hamelink
@goudenkruisdragers.nl

In Memoriam

Jaap van Belzen	Vlissingen
P. Kruidenier	Winterswijk
Cees van Winsen	Nijmegen
Harry Kwant	Nijmegen
P.J.W. Arts	's-Hertogenbosch
H. Heijne Makkreel	Heemsteede
Dhr. K. Bunschoten	Huizen