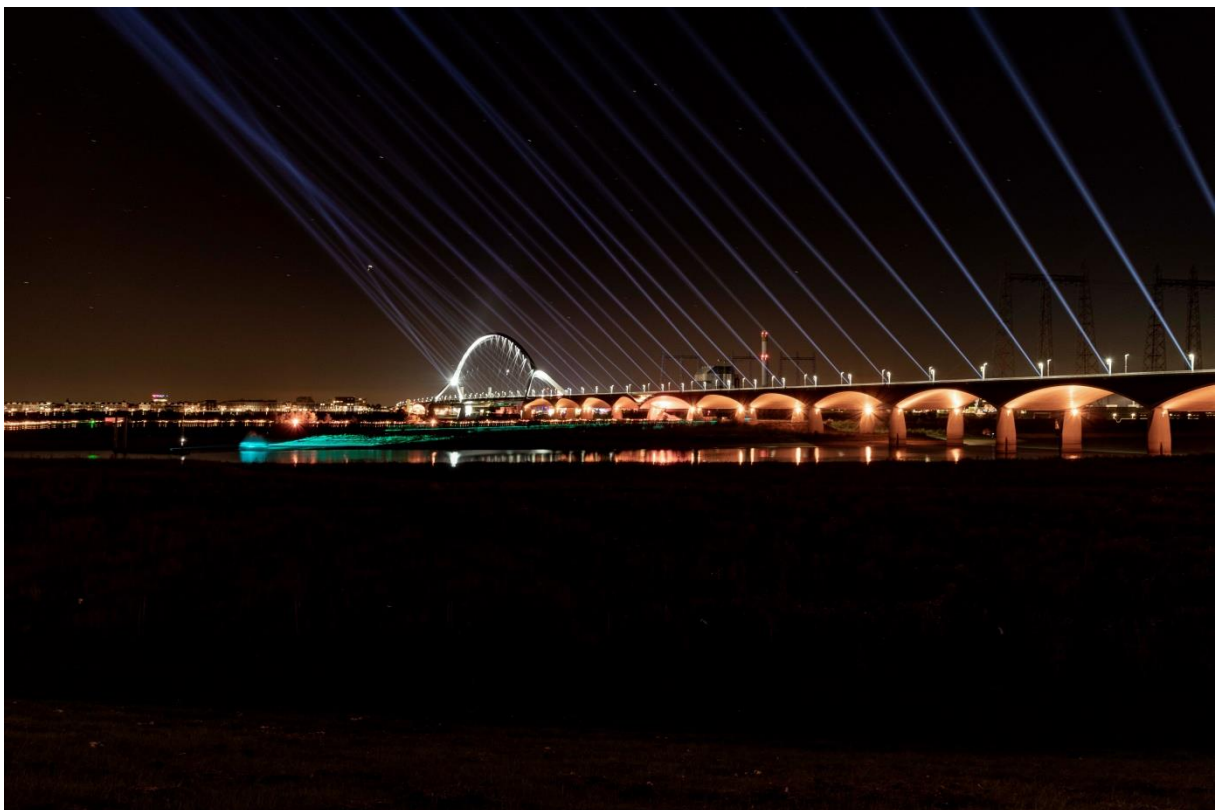


SUNSET MARCH

2019 Annual Report

Sunset March #1536 up to and including #1900



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Photo of the 48 lasers during the 21 September special Sunset March #1799 (Photography Jacco van Mierlo)

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Sunset March Board also known as Sunset March Team.

Left to right: George de Jongh, Henk Hanenburg, Dirk-Jan van Zuidam, Douwe Osinga, René Scheeres, Wim van Zijl, Kees Bleijerveld, Wim van Mierlo, Tim Ruijling; all of them veterans.

1. Introduction

The year 2019 was a very special year. In October the Sunset March celebrated its 5th anniversary and got its adult status then; to **commemorate** this event a book on the Sunset March was released on our date of birth: 19 October.

The past was also marked by the commemoration of 75 years of Freedom of the Southern part of the Netherlands. A lot of activities and commemorations were organized. Sunset March was involved in a number of them.

Nijmegen Municipality took part in the organization of 75 special Sunset Marches which were held from 22 February until 20 September 2019.

The 75 special Sunset Marches were fully booked up in a very short period of time and in order to prevent disappointments arising, a number of additional Sunset Marches was added for schools, boards, groups of friends and clubs, the so-called 2.0 version.

Other highlights during the year were the 75th commemoration of the River Waal Crossing on 20 September, followed by a special Sunset March for Nijmegen inhabitants, one day later, which was marched by well over 7,500 people.

To top it all up Tim Ruijling received the Traianus Award in the name of the Sunset March on 15 November.

2. What is the Sunset March?

Start

The Sunset March is an initiative by a number of veterans of Overbetuwe and which was taken during a regular meeting of Overbetuwe Veterans on 27 September 2014 in order to use the "Lights Crossing"¹ light monument on the new city bridge, called "The Crossing", in Nijmegen for a live and daily tribute to our allied liberators. It is not only meant as a commemoration of the sacrifice of the American soldiers who paid for our freedom far from home, but also to create a visible bridge to all veterans who took part in missions all over the world and are still contributing to the realization of peace and security.

This idea immediately received a welcome response. A special website was created and on Sunday 19 October 2014 the first Sunset March was walked. The five initiators are Henk Hanenburg, Wim van Mierlo, Douwe Osinga, Tim Ruijling and Dirk-Jan van Zuidam. The foundation board was extended by Kees Bleijerveld, George de Jongh, René Scheeres and Wim van Zijl shortly afterwards.

Since 11 November 2015 Sunset March has been a foundation with the cultural ANBI status (Foundation which has as its mission to provide public benefit).

¹ www.atelierveldwerk.nl

How does it work?

Since 19 October 2014 Sunset March has been a daily tribute to the allied soldiers who fought for the freedom of The Netherlands. In Nijmegen a new city bridge was built, called "The Crossing", close to the section of the river Waal where American soldiers of US 82nd Airborne Division crossed the Waal to the northern bank in WWII.

This operation is considered to be one of the most heroic actions of the Second World War. It owes part of its fame to the well-known war film "A Bridge Too Far".²



Overall view of the Waal Crossing (Photography Groesbeek Freedom Museum)

During this so-called "Waal Crossing" 48 American soldiers were killed. Atelier Veldwerk¹ created a light monument, called "Lights Crossing" on The Crossing.

This light monument, the largest war monument of Europe, on the new bridge, is quite special. On the bridge there are 48 pairs of lamp posts, one pair per fallen soldier. Around sunset these lights are lit, pair by pair, at walking pace. Lighting them all takes nearly 12 minutes. The first pair that is lit, is located under the southern arch of the bridge, the inverted letter V. Every evening a veteran walks the Sunset March on the bridge from south to north.

When the first pair of lamp posts is lit, the veteran starts walking across the bridge at the pace with which the lights are lit. As soon as the other side of the river Waal is reached, the march is halted at the Waal Crossing monument "The Crossing" and the military salute is performed.

The basic rule of the Sunset March is and will be that the "March" is held **with decency** and **in a respectful way** at all times.

As a "Veteran of the Day", a veteran will receive a unique numbered certificate after completion of his/her first Sunset March. Each and every day only one veteran can be "Veteran of the Day" and only one numbered certificate is issued per day and per veteran, even if more veterans are marching that day or if a veteran marches several times as a "Veteran of the Day". It is very special that school classes, groups of friends or interested citizens or veterans often accompany the "Veteran of the Day" marching across the Crossing bridge.

² Cornelius Ryan, 1974

Regularly “officials” and board members of national veteran organizations perform the Sunset March. With special events and on commemorative days large groups of interested people and participants walk the Sunset March. On those occasions a horn player plays the “Last Post” and flowers and wreaths are laid.

Fixed times each year are: 4 and 5 May (Remembrance Day and Liberation Day), the 4-day Marches Week, 20 September, 19 October (Sunset March Anniversary) and 11 November (International Veterans Day /Remembrance Day).

Social media

Veterans can register to walk the Sunset March on the Sunset March website (<http://www.sunsetmarch.nl>). On the website a large number of interesting facts can be found as well, such as objective and method of working, register of veteran marchers, foundation data, marchers’ experiences, photos and videos. The board members Dirk-Jan van Zuidam and Tim Ruijling are responsible for the designing of our website and they also take care of keeping it up to date.

In addition to the website Sunset March is also present on Facebook. Our Facebook page is used for announcements, impressions and reactions concerning (special) Sunset Marches. Our Facebook page is maintained by board member Wim van Mierlo.

LinkedIn members can register themselves for the Sunset March Group on LinkedIn.

Sunset March Team/ Team31

In order to see to it that at least one veteran walks the Sunset March on any one day of the month, Team31 was founded in addition to the Sunset March Team in 2015. This group of veterans is willing to act as “Veteran of the Day” in case there is no registration of a veteran on the website on a given date. They are prepared to do so once a month, should such an occasion arise.

The use of these “regular marchers” is essential for the continuity of the Sunset March. The Sunset March Team was part of Team31 until this year. This year the board (Team) was disconnected from Team31.

There were two reasons for doing so: the first and most important reason was to create more space to attract more extra regular marchers. The second reason was to make a clear distinction between the board (Team), with its special tasks and (legal) responsibilities and the members of Team31 with other tasks and responsibilities. The 9 additional positions which were realized in doing so, have all rapidly been filled with new members.

The youngest member is 32 years of age and the oldest participant is over 80 years old. The members live in the Nijmegen area, but there are members from Zwolle, Dronten and Eindhoven as well.

Last year a Team31 member was the first to take leave from his group.

Theo Mevis, on behalf of the Sunset March, we thank you for your unconditional commitment. At present Team31 has three members with a foreign nationality and consists of:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Björn Andreassen (N) | 12. Bastiaan van Es | 22. Theo Neijenhuis |
| 2. Willem Baardman | 13. Patrick van Es | 23. Okke Jan Oosterhoff |
| 3. Paul inden Bosch | 14. Derk Finke | 24. Jo Quaadvlieg |
| 4. Max Bozon | 15. Dick Hesse | 25. Antoine van Rijsbergen |
| 5. Denise Caspers (US) | 16. Jurgen Janssen | 26. Dennis van der Stroom |
| 6. Laurent Cecillon (F) | 17. Alinda van der Kooi | 27. Jan Timmermans |
| 7. Hans Cuper | 18. Piet Koremans | 28. Bert van der Vegte |
| 8. Henk Deelen | 19. Paul van der Laak | 29. Rob Vogel |
| 9. Pieter Derks | 20. Coert Langenhuijzen | 30. Co Willemsen |
| 10. Cees van Doorn | 21. Anang Melis | 31. Jos IJkhout |
| 11. Jorg Elfrink | | |



Group photo of participants of the Team31 meeting on 19 January 2019

It has become a tradition to celebrate a happy get-together on the third Saturday of January. Team31 had a breakfast party at Fletcher Hotel Erica in Berg en Dal. Marcel Hoogenboom, manager of Hotel Erica, told his emotional story about the experiences of his family during World War II. Dorine Steenberghe held a lecture about the realization of the book "De Oversteek" ("The Crossing") and Rino Lafranceschina of the "Oversteek" maintenance group explained how the maintenance work of the bridge (and the lights) is organized.

Rudy Luijters of Atelier Veldwerk told about the realization and backgrounds of the "Lights Crossing" light monument. Soraya van Weereld of the Veterans Shop finally showed the new veteran uniform. She explained in which way a veteran uniform can be obtained. All in all, thanks to good hosting of Marcel Hoogenboom of Fletcher Hotel Erica in Berg en Dal it was a useful and pleasant meeting.

3. 2019 “Veteran of the Day”

In the past year a large number of “unique” veterans of the day were added to the list. Total 150.

4. 2019 Activities and Further Details

Board Meetings

In 2019 the Board organized 4 meetings. These meetings were held in the meeting room of Dirksen Opleidingen at Elst (Gld.) on the Saturday mornings of 11 March, 26 July, 14 September and 14 December 2019.

In addition the Managing Committee (MC = president, treasurer and secretary) met 3 times at HANOS in Nijmegen on 16 February, 13 July and 30 November.

Cooperation

This year the Sunset March activities were again supported by a large number of institutions and organizations. Existing partnerships were continued and consolidated, others were revitalized. Donations and sponsoring made it possible to realize all activities planned. In spite of the (sometimes generous) donations not all activities can be financed out of the Foundation’s resources; private contributions towards some activities or clothes remain essential. Our sponsors and partners are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ➤ Pro-Intell Security Solutions | ➤ BAM Infra |
| ➤ Veterans Institute | ➤ Dutch Veteran Bikers Association |
| ➤ Jaleesa Derksen Photography | ➤ Dirksen Opleidingen, Elst |
| ➤ VFund | ➤ Maaik van Helmond |
| ➤ 4-Day Marches Foundation | ➤ Overbetuwe Veterans |
| ➤ Liberation Route Europe | ➤ De Liemers Veterans Foundation |
| ➤ Herberts Elst Printing Business | ➤ Overbetuwe Municipality |
| ➤ Quo Vadis Publishers | ➤ 11th Airmobile Brigade, A-Company |
| ➤ Commander Military Music Armed Forces | ➤ 82nd Airborne Division |
| ➤ Kersten Retail Elst | ➤ Nijmegen Municipality |
| ➤ VSI | ➤ Dedicated Fashion, Nijmegen |
| ➤ SIDN | ➤ Karel Doorman Fund |
| ➤ Friendship Albany Foundation Nijmegen | ➤ Nijmegen Guild |
| ➤ Atelier Veldwerk | ➤ Gelderland Commemorates |
| ➤ Fletcher Hotel Erica Berg en Dal | ➤ De Oversteek (The Crossing) Primary State School |

Nijmegen 75th Anniversary of the Liberation

In 2019 the 75th anniversary was held to commemorate the fact that 75 years ago a large part of Southern Netherlands was liberated from the occupiers. On 20 September 1944 Nijmegen was liberated by the allied forces, at the cost of severe losses.

In order to commemorate this event Nijmegen Municipality, together with the Sunset March, initiated the plan to organize 75 special Sunset Marches between 22 February (the day on which Nijmegen was bombed by the American air force and when many hundreds of people lost their lives in 1944) and 20 September (the day on which the Waal Crossing took place in 1944). Many clubs, town councils, groups of friends and families have already registered for these special Sunset Marches.

These groups were accompanied by a Team31 guide. Photographs were taken of all groups which were included in the book Sunset March. Interest in the special Sunset Marches was overwhelming. There were even more than 75 registrations. In order to prevent disappointments arising in these groups, additional special Sunset Marches were organized for them as well. They were skilfully guided by the Nijmegen City Guild guides. Photos were taken of these special marches as well. These photos were not included in the book, but they were sent together with the accompanying certificate.

150th Anniversary of the Medical Troops

In 2019 the Medical Troops Regiment celebrated its 150th anniversary. During that period when the Medical Troops were (internationally) deployed 71 soldiers were killed in action in the course of 53 days. On these 53 days in 2019 every day a veteran of the Medical Troops Regiment walked as "Veteran of the Day". By way of conclusion of this very successful and highly valued initiative a large group of veterans of the Medical Troops Regiment took part in the March on 8 December 2019.

Special Marching Days

This year, 2019, there were 365 Sunset Marches, every day at another time depending on the time of sunset. It occurs in ever fewer instances that a veteran crosses the bridge on his/her own. Nearly every day there are "followers" who join in and quite a lot of marches are walked in a (veteran) club setting.

Every year there are special Sunset Marches. However, this year there were quite a lot of them. It was especially caused by the two special initiatives which were described before.

It would be going too far to mention all special Sunset Marches in this report.

Some memorable Sunset Marches with special participants were among others:

- 11 February: Hanke Bruins-Slot, member of the Dutch House of Commons walks the Sunset March.
- 22 February: Commemoration of the bombardment of Nijmegen and participation in the Sunset March by a civil delegation from Cleves (Kleve, Germany), among whom the Dutch Consul and an international military delegation of CAOC, JAPCC and Luftwaffekommando Nord (Air Command North) led by General Major Huhn. (German Major General)
- 23 February: The first of 75 Special Sunset Marches on the occasion of 75 years of freedom is marched by members of Nijmegen town council with mayor Hubert Bruls. On the same day the second group also walks the March: the Korps Gele Rijders. (Mounted Artillery Corps, the "Yellow Riders")
- 12 March: Niagara University History Department students
- 13 March: Mayors and Aldermen of Beuningen, Druten and Wijchen municipalities.
- 23 April: A very special event was the participation of the Saint Gregory Guild from Heumen, on account of their beautiful attire
- 25 April: Over 100 Participants of the VEVA course of Dulon College in Ede.
- 4 May: A group of about 100 inhabitants of Nijmegen West.
- 17 May: A large group of American River-Cruise tourists (Princeton and Yale University alumni)
- 4 June: Four American WW II veterans walked a special Sunset March during the day which was watched by many people. The names of the four participants are Gordon D. Monson, Harry Miller, Clifford Stump and Thomas Lucas. The first three of them were as a matter of fact deployed during the Nijmegen Waal Bridge battles.
- 26 June: Gelderland Provincial Council Members, accompanied by the Commissioner of the King, John Berends.
- 27 June: Large group of KMA-cadets with former Commander of the Armed Forces, Peter van Uhm.
- 15 July: On the Monday evening preceding the start of the 4-Day Marches military detachments from the USA, Germany, Canada, Great Britain and the Netherlands take part in the Sunset March. This has meanwhile become a tradition now.



Photo of the Special Sunset March on 15 July 2019

- 5 September: Mayor and Aldermen of Lingewaard Municipality.
- 14 September: Mayor and Aldermen of Overbetuwe Municipality.
- 19 September: All contact persons of the 75 special Sunset Marches walk the march. Special guests are among others the Ambassador of the USA Pete Hoekstra, Mayor Bruls, Chloe Gavin (daughter of major general J. Gavin) and general Richard Clarke, Commander of the US Special Operations Command
- 20 September: 75 years after the Waal Crossing the Sunset March Team and a 504 PIR delegation walk the Sunset March together.
- 21 September: 7500 Nijmegen inhabitants celebrate Freedom during a special Sunset March.
- 8 December: Last Sunset March in the framework of the 150th Anniversary of the Medical Troops.

Other Events

Media

In 2019 the Sunset March received a great deal of attention in the media, locally, regionally, nationally as well as internationally.

It was partly caused by the 75 special Sunset Marches. Other subjects which attracted a lot of attention were the special Sunset March on 21 September, the fifth anniversary and the book presentation on 19 October 2019.

Consultations in Forums

Board members regularly met in external forums, among others with:

- Nijmegen Municipality: multiple subjects, but this year especially about 75 special Sunset Marches
- Gelderland Commemorates: several times with discussions and presentations about this subject (e.g. in Arnhem and Groesbeek)

Commemorative Events

Board members were among other things present at the following commemorative events:

- 8 February: "Operation Veritable" Commemoration Ceremony on the Groesbeek Canadian cemetery
- 5 May: Wageningen: Liberation Festival.
- 17 September: Kranenburg (Germany) Commemoration Ceremony "Hass tötet, Liebe versöhnt". (Hate Kills, Love Reconciles).
- 20 September: Waal Crossing Commemoration Ceremony. An annual commemorative activity takes place on the Oosterhout Dyke in remembrance of the Waal Crossing. This year the commemorative event was organized on a large scale by the Nijmegen Municipality and there were quite a lot of invited persons, among whom US Dutch Ambassador Pete Hoekstra, General D. Clarke, Mayor Bruls, Chloe Gavin (daughter of Major General James Gavin) and even a number of WWII veterans or their representatives. Orange Lanyards, (connected with the so-called Militaire Willemsorde or in English the Military William's Order) were presented to some veterans or their representatives on behalf of the Dutch Government. Sunset March members played a major role this ceremony.

Presentation of the Book

On 19 October 2019 the book "Sunset March, bridge between present and wartime past" was presented. The presentation was successful and 100 invited people were present. The presentation was held by famous Nijmegen journalist Rob Jaspers.

There were short presentations by Freddy Heinzl, honorary consul of the Netherlands in Cleves (Germany), Leo van Bergen en Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Jerke of the American Embassy. The book was published by Quo Vadis(QV) Publishers and it was written by Joris-Jan Voermans. The photography in the book was done by our "own" photographer Jaleesa Derksen. The first copy was presented to Mayor Bruls of Nijmegen. Part of the proceeds of the book will go to the Sunset March Foundation. The book is available from



bookshops in Nijmegen and its surrounding area and through the website of QV Publishers (<https://www.uitgeverijqv.nl/product/sunset-march/>).

Traianus Award

15 November; the Traianus Award is presented to a Nijmegen business annually to an eye catching initiative that can never be awarded the "Entrepreneur of the Year" prize. This year the honour was given to our president, Tim Ruijling and the Sunset March.



Information

In addition to the various presentations which were held at schools in the surrounding area the Promotion Team provided information on the following occasions:

- 5 May: Wageningen Liberation Festival,
- 28 June: Nijmegen Veterans Day,
- 29 June: National Veterans Day in The Hague (Den Haag),
- 11 September: Royal Air Force Veterans Day in Eindhoven,
- 28 September: Large-scale 5-year UNIFIL reunion in Breda,
- 4 October: Veterans Day Koninklijke Marechaussee (Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary) in Apeldoorn.

5. 2019 Finances

The Sunset March Foundation has to deal with a number of fixed annual costs. They are domain and website fees, keeping a specific bank account for the ANBI status, flowers and wreath for commemorative events and promotional activities. The other expenses are variable and are adjusted and determined by the board annually. The foundation was able to close its financial accounts for 2019 with a sound result.

Besides a fixed annual sponsoring amount from our partner Pro-Intell Security Solutions and from SIDN, there were various substantial private contributions and as well as generous support in the field of materials from Nijmegen Municipality. Participation in the Club Funding Campaign of RABO-bank also yielded a contribution to our funds this year.

6. 2020 Outlook

The year 2020 will especially be dedicated to 75 years of Freedom in The Netherlands. Sunset March will pay special attention to the theme of Freedom in several ways. Our neighbours in the east will also participate in this event. The basic element of the Sunset March will remain the daily tribute march along the 48 lamp posts on the bridge and the salute at the monument. This year the programme contains 366 marches.

This is the planning schedule for a number of coming events:

- 18 January: Team31 Meeting at Fletcher Hotel Erica.
- 4 en 5 May: Receiving of the Liberation Flame and informal Remembrance Day. With planned participation of walkers from The Netherlands and Germany.
- 20 July: Large international military detachment will take part in the Sunset March on the day preceding the 104th 4-Day Marches.
- 20 September: The Waal Crossing Commemoration.
- 19 October: The 6th Sunset March Anniversary.
- 11 November: International Veterans Day.