

Press releases Four Days Marches 2015

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Press releases - 99th Four Days Marches

Press Release 2015.001 - 23 January 2015

Registration for the Marches will open at 8am

Registration for the 99th International Four Days Marches Nijmegen, due to take place from 21 to 24 July this year, will open at 8am on Monday 2 February. Having been delayed 8 hours compared with last year for practical reasons, this new opening time is the only change to the registration procedure.

The registration limit for the 99th Four Days Marches has once again been set at 46,000. If the registration limit is exceeded, a draw will be held amongst first-time entrants, i.e. participants registering for reward 1. The draw only applies to those registered as individual participants.

The registration fee for the 99th Four Days Marches is €53.50. Members of KWBN, the walking association created on 1 January by the merger of KNBLO-NL and NWB, will be eligible for a €5 discount.

Two periods

As usual, there will be two registration periods this year. Registration period 1 is from 8am on Monday 2 February to midnight at the end of Friday 27 February inclusive. Those who successfully completed the 98th Four Days Marches last year may register during this first period. Girls and boys who turn 12 years old in 2015 may also register during the first period.

Registration period 2 is from 8am on Monday 2 March to midnight at the end of Friday 3 April inclusive. All others wishing to take part in the 99th Four Days Marches can register during the second period.

Draw

If necessary, a draw will be held on Friday 10 April among the individual civilian participants who have not previously earned the Four Days Marches medal. Three groups will be exempt from the draw - those born in 2003, those who were excluded by the draw from taking part in the 97th and 98th Four Days Marches and those who register through Via Vierdaagse.

Changes

Almost no organisational changes have been made for the 99th Four Days Marches. The routes from 2014 have barely been changed, but Stichting DE 4DAAGSE is still considering the best route for walkers to take over the bridge, through Lent and along Oosterhoutsedijk on day 1, the Day of Elst. This is due to construction work on the bridge over the River Waal and around the new island 'Veur Lent'.

Website

Stichting DE 4DAAGSE is expecting 99.7% of walkers to register for the Four Days Marches online once again. The regulations applicable to the 99th Four Days Marches and registration can be consulted on the official Four Days Marches website www.4daagse.nl.

Four Days Marches sponsored walk

When registering for the 99th Four Days Marches on 2 February, participants can also take part in the Four Days Marches sponsored walk. Anyone who registers for the Four Days Marches can create a personal campaign page at www.devierdaagsesponsorloop.nl and choose a charity to raise money for through sponsorship. Creating a campaign page on this site makes it easy for walkers to find sponsors and a charity, as well as facilitating the administrative side of things. What is more, the site comes with a guarantee that every last cent of the sponsor money will go the chosen charity.

Via Vierdaagse 2015

Registration for the training and preparation programme Via Vierdaagse 2015 opens at the same time as registration for the 99th Four Days Marches. With this programme, the Dutch walking association KWBN and Stichting DE 4DAAGSE aim to support up to 1,500 first-time entrants in achieving their first Four Days Marches Cross.

Only walkers who have never before achieved a Four Days Marches Cross and who are not yet members of KWBN can take part in Via Vierdaagse. Participation in Via Vierdaagse costs €189 and this includes the registration fee for the 99th Four Days Marches.

Registration opens at 8am on Monday 2 February at www.viavierdaagse.nl where more information about the training and preparation programme can also be found.

Austria is Four Days Marches tourism partner

Austria, arrive and revive, in the Alpine Four Days Marches for instance

'Oostenrijk, uitpakken en meer beleven' (Austria, arrive and revive) is the motto of the campaign with which the Austrian Tourist Office will be presenting Austria as a walking country during the 99th Four Days Marches. The Austrian Tourist Office has entered into a sponsorship agreement with Stichting DE 4DAAGSE for this purpose.

The campaign during the 99th Four Days Marches will focus on Carinthia and the Kitzbühel Alps. The state of Carinthia will host the second Alpen4Daagse (Alpine Four Days Marches) from 7 to 10 September this year, and Stichting DE 4DAAGSE and the Koninklijke Wandel Bond Nederland walking association will once again support the event with their expertise.

Austria has long been the perfect country for a spot of walking and has something for all sorts of walkers, whether they want a challenging hike to the peaks of the Alps or a gentle (and flat) walk along lakes or through the valleys. Trekking from hut to hut for several days, taking the children with you but not your luggage (someone else will transport that for you!) or staying in hotels are just some of the wide range of options.

Anyone who has ever visited Austria in summer will know how many magnificent routes there are with spectacular panoramic views. Of all the Dutch tourists who visit Austria in summer, 40% prefer to spend their holiday walking in the mountains.

It is no coincidence that the Dutch voted Austria their number one holiday destination in 2014. In some 2.8 million reviews posted on independent travel website Zoover, Dutch holidaymakers gave Austria as a country an 8.18 out of 10 rating, higher than any other country on the list of top 10 holiday destinations. The average rating that the Dutch gave their holiday in Austria was 8.15 out of 10, and those who stayed in an Austrian bed & breakfast were most satisfied, giving an average rating of 9.17 out of 10.

Various media used by the Four Days Marches, including social media, will be used to make the public aware of Austria's involvement in the 99th Four Days Marches. The promotion of Austria as a walking country will reach its peak on the third day - the Day of Groesbeek - when the Austrian Tourist Board will provide a drinking water station on Zevenheuvelenweg.

Four Days Marches still popular

Stichting DE 4DAAGSE delights 3,395 first-time entrants in the draw

51,462 people from all over the world have registered for the 99th Four Days Marches. Under supervision of a notary, 3,395 first-time entrants were assigned a starting ticket in the draw on Friday.

Despite not equalling the records from 2014 (53,844 registrations, 7,844 first-time entrants excluded by the draw), the number of registrations for the 99th Four Days Marches shows without a doubt that the world's biggest walking event is still hugely popular. A maximum of 46,000 starting tickets are available for the 2015 Four Days Marches, which will be held from 21 to 24 July.

It is striking that there has mainly been a drop in the number of first-time entrants registering for the Four Days Marches. "The lower number of first-time entrants is a result of the rule announced in 2013, stating that you must have completed the Four Days Marches successfully at least four times between 2010 and 2016 if you want to be guaranteed a starting ticket for the anniversary edition in 2016," explains Johan Willemstein, chairman of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE.

Duplicate registrations

Before the draw under supervision of the notary took place, all duplicate and other incorrect registrations were removed from Stichting DE 4DAAGSE's registration file. The results were announced at www.4daagse.nl after the draw, and all participants will be informed personally of the outcome.

History

The number of registrations for the 99th Four Days Marches is the third highest in the 99-year history of the marches, topped only by 2014 and 2005, in which respectively 53,844 and 53,336 people registered. 2003 holds the record for the number of starters, when 44,812 walkers turned up for the first day of the Four Days Marches.

Figures

Year	Limit	Registrations	Signed in	Draw
2005	47,500	53,336	43,498	Yes
2006	49,000	48,630	44,015	No
2007	49,000	42,270	38,171	No
2008	45,000	43,450	39,128	No
2009	45,000	48,317	41,205	Yes
2010	45,000	48,435	40,620	Yes
2011	45,000	47,684	42,812	Yes
2012	45,000	49,896	41,472	Yes
2013	46,000	50,314	42,493	Yes
2014	46,000	53,844	43,013	Yes
2015	46,000	51,462		Yes

Four Days Marches sponsored walk

There has also been a lot of interest in the Four Days Marches sponsored walk already. When registration for the 99th Four Days Marches closed, over 1,000 sponsors had already pledged financial support for the charities chosen by some 200 Four Days Marches participants. A total amount of over €35,000 has already been pledged for 106 different charities.

Walkers can choose to walk for a good cause as part of the Four Days Marches sponsored walk until 24 July. Sponsors also have until that date to pledge their donations at

www.devierdaagsesponsorloop.nl.

Route changes in the 99th Four Days Marches

Minor route changes in Lent, Weurt and the Weezenhof district on the way out of Nijmegen

Participants in the 99th Four Days Marches, and naturally also local residents and fans cheering on the walkers, will notice several minor route changes this year in comparison to the 2014 edition.

Two of these route changes are due to roadworks, while another change, which will be in force on both day 2 and day 4, was made to improve the flow of the 40,000-strong army of walkers and reduce inconvenience caused to local residents.

Day of Elst

The longest route change in terms of distance is the one on the first day, the Day of Elst. On the return to Nijmegen, the army of walkers (all distances) will avoid the last part of Oosterhoutsedijk in Lent. Once they have passed under the Waal Crossing, the civilian walkers will turn left onto the temporary construction road and then right onto the bus lane (Graaf Allardsingel) towards Lent railway station. Military participants will continue a little further along Oosterhoutsedijk after passing under the Waal Crossing, up to Zaligestraat, where they will turn left to get to Lent railway station. From there, all walkers will walk along the bus lane that runs parallel to Prins Mauritsingel, turn right onto Stationsplein, left onto Hoge Bongerd, right onto Griftdijk Zuid and then along the bus lane and cycle lane across the bridge over the River Waal into Nijmegen.

This change was decided upon in January this year, when there was no way of knowing that work on the new 'Veur Lent' island would progress so speedily that Oosterhoutsedijk through Lent and the new road along the embankment of the secondary channel of the River Waal would be finished before the start of the Four Days Marches.

"It's great to see these works nearing completion so fast. If we had known this back in January, we wouldn't have had to change the route and Four Days Marches participants would have been some of the first people to experience the results of all this work on 'Veur Lent'. But all the scenarios for the emergency services and the Four Days Marches itself have already been adapted to the altered route, so unfortunately we cannot change it back at this point," explains Arno Bernards, Stichting DE 4DAAGSE's route developer. "During the 100th edition of the Four Days Marches in 2016 all walkers will once again pass through Lent along Oosterhoutsedijk and the new embankment," guarantees Bernards.

Day of Wijchen

A minor route change has been made in Wijchen for 30km-participants and military 40km-participants. The route will no longer include Valendriesweg, but will instead pass the Arcus building to Oosterweg, following this road towards Wijchen's Markt.

Owing to a major overhaul of the Van Heemstraweg - Kerkstraat/Postkantoorstraat junction in Weurt, walkers will be diverted on day 2 (Day of Wijchen and Beuningen). "We'll have to wait and see whether this route change is actually implemented," says Arno Bernards. "If the work progresses quickly, we may be able to use the reconstructed junction after all and walkers can simply follow Van Heemstraweg."

If work on the junction is not completed in time, the walkers will turn left just before Weurt, leaving Van Heemstraweg to take Pastoor van der Marckstraat. They will stay on this road all the way through the old part of the village of Weurt until Westkanaaldijk, where they will turn right and continue up to the roundabout just ahead of the lock. After crossing the bridge across the lock, the usual route will be resumed, running through the Waterkwartier area and following the Waal embankment.

Weezenhof

Earlier on the second day, walkers will already have had a route change as they walked out of the city in the early hours of the morning. After the Hatertsebrug bridge across the Maas-Waal Canal, walkers usually pass through the Weezenhof district towards Staddijk.

“People living in the Weezenhof district were then required to park their cars outside the neighbourhood, as the area was closed to incoming and outgoing traffic. We can reduce inconvenience caused to Weezenhof residents by bypassing this area altogether,” Arno Bernards explains.

After the Hatertsebrug bridge, the army of walkers will stay on the left-hand lanes of the four-lane Van Boetbergweg up to the last major junction before the A73 motorway. That is where walkers will turn left onto Staddijk, in the direction of the Hatert and Overasselt Fens. This route change will apply both on day 2 and day 4 (Day of Cuijk) of the 99th Four Days Marches.

Click [here](#) for the Street plan 2015 (pdf - Dutch version)

Press Release for the international media



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Nijmegen Four Days Marches walking achievement event, Netherlands The Walk of the World

Some 46,000 walkers of over 70 different nationalities are registered for the 99th International Four Days Marches Nijmegen (Netherlands), which will be held from 21 to 24 July 2015. This figure includes 5,000 military servicemen and women from over 30 different countries.

The Nijmegen Four Days Marches has been the world's biggest multi-day walking achievement event for several decades now. The Four Days Marches is not a competition; it is all about personal achievement. Depending on their age and sex, participants walk 30, 40 or 50 kilometres per day for four consecutive days. On successful completion of the marches, they receive the coveted Four Days Marches Cross, a royally approved decoration.

Top achievement

As well as this decoration, the glorious entry of all walkers on the last afternoon of the Four Days Marches in Nijmegen is considered the ultimate reward for the walkers' top achievement, which is physical and often also mental. The final 15 kilometres of the route are packed with hundreds of thousands of keen spectators waiting to cheer on the Four Days Marches participants to the finish line. With musical accompaniment from numerous bands, the festive, colourful procession of walkers, which tails back for many kilometres, is showered in gladioli - the Four Days Marches flower.

Bonding, camaraderie, the sporting challenge and the atmosphere all make walking the Four Days Marches a unique experience. Many walkers find they have caught the 'Four Days Marches bug', which compels them to keep signing up for 'The Walk of the World' year after year. The current record holder is an 83-year-old man from Nijmegen, who is hoping to complete his 68th Four Days Marches in 2015. Men and women, and girls and boys take part in the walking achievement event, with participants' ages ranging from 11 to 93 years.

The Nijmegen Four Days Marches is so popular that thousands of fans have to be excluded by the draw each year, as the routes are unable to accommodate more than the maximum of 45,000 walkers. Allowing more walkers to take part in the time available would impact on walking comfort and be detrimental to the atmosphere and walkers' safety.

Range of landscapes

Walking 30, 40 or 50 kilometres in and around Nijmegen for four days is an intense way of experiencing the wide range of landscapes that the Netherlands has to offer.

Day 1 of the Four Days Marches takes the army of walkers through the Betuwe region, north of Nijmegen and traditionally seen as the orchard of the Netherlands. Situated between the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen, this region tastefully combines its primarily agricultural landscape with the latest in urban development and architecture.

Day 2 of the Four Days Marches takes walkers to the 'Land van Maas en Waal', to the west of Nijmegen. This polder landscape, complete with windmills and dikes in true Dutch style, is nestled in between the country's major rivers - the Meuse and the Waal.

Day 3 is seen as the Four Days Marches' mountain stage by the tens of thousands of walkers. The routes for this day head south and east of Nijmegen, over hills and through valleys, centring on the wine

village of Groesbeek. The hilly nature of the Day of Groesbeek tests the walkers' fitness and perseverance to the limit.

The fourth and final day of the Four Days Marches traditionally takes the walkers to Cuijk, south of Nijmegen, where troops of Dutch and German military engineers have worked together to build a special pontoon bridge over the river Meuse for the walkers. The river is closed to shipping traffic so the walkers can safely cross the Meuse without any disruptions. The village of Mook on the other side is actually the start of the glorious Four Days Marches entry. Participants walk the final 15 kilometres, filmed by dozens of TV cameras and cheered on by hundreds of thousands of keen spectators, on their way to the ultimate reward, the Four Days Marches cross.

Four Days Festivities

The Four Days Festivities descend on Nijmegen city centre during the Four Days Marches and are being organised for the 46th time this year by Nijmegen's tradespeople. The Four Days Festivities take place in the centre of Nijmegen and, together with the marches, attract 2.35 million visitors to the city every year. The Nijmegen Four Days Marches has therefore been the Netherlands' biggest free event for many years now! The event, due to take place from 18 to 24 July in 2015, will see more than 2750 artists perform on 37 stages.

Hospitable Nijmegen

Families in Nijmegen welcome thousands of walkers into their homes during the week of the Four Days Marches. Nijmegen, the oldest city in the Netherlands, is an exciting melting pot of the old and the new, combining innovation and history, modern architecture and grand old buildings, a green environment and a vibrant city centre. The city is the perfect place to shop and is renowned for its numerous bars and restaurants. It also has a greater concentration of pavement cafes than any other city in the Netherlands. Nijmegen's parks are a nice place to while away a few hours, and the immediate surroundings are lovely for walks or bike rides. As a university city, Nijmegen is one of the top Dutch cities in economic terms and has an excellent reputation in the fields of high-tech and health. Nijmegen is also a very cultural and sporting city, and is home to numerous festivals and other sporting events apart from the Four Days Marches.

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100th Nijmegen Four Days Marches in 2016

2015 marks the eve of a truly unique anniversary for the Nijmegen Four Days Marches, since the event will be held for the 100th time in 2016, from 19 to 22 July. The organisers have been busy preparing for this special edition since 2013. The maximum number of participants has been raised to 50,000 for 2016 only, an additional route of 55 kilometres per day has been put together and numerous other celebrations are being organised to make the 100th Nijmegen Four Days Marches one that the walkers and their supporters will never forget.

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History of the Four Days Marches

Starting out as an initiative of the Dutch army, the first Four Days Marches was held in 1909. Supported by the commanding officers, the organisers increasingly saw sport as a way of improving the fitness and physical skills of (mostly) young men. 306 people took part in the first edition, including 10 civilians.

The first women walked the Four Days Marches in 1910, back when the event started from different places around the Netherlands. In 1925, the always hospitable Nijmegen - the country's oldest city, having been founded more than 2000 years ago - became the permanent start and finish location of the Four Days Marches. Reasons for this decision were the city's status as a Roman garrison city, the fact that the Colonial Reserve was based in Nijmegen, the beautiful surroundings and the enthusiasm of the city's residents.

The Nijmegen Four Days Marches has been an international sporting event since 1928, when 48 German soldiers, 40 British civilians, 20 Norwegian soldiers and 1 French photographer took part. Around twenty per cent of participants currently are from abroad, with 70 nationalities every continent is represented. The Four Days Marches was also one of the founding organisations of the global IML Walking Association in 1987.

Due to World Wars One and Two, no Four Days Marches was held in 1914 and 1915, and 1940 to 1945 respectively. The 2006 Four Days Marches was cancelled after the first marching day due to extreme weather (heat) putting the walkers' safety at risk.

End text

All images below are duty free available on demand. Please contact: communicatie@4daagse.nl



Day 3 of the Four Days Marches is known as the 'mountain stage' thanks to its hilly route.
Photo: Ger Loeffen Fotografie, Beuningen, The Netherlands.



The 40,000-strong army of walkers crosses the bridge over the River Waal just outside Nijmegen into the Betuwe region on Day 1 of the Four Days Marches.
Photo: Ger Loeffen Fotografie, Beuningen, The Netherlands.



The glorious entry of all walkers on the last afternoon of the Four Days Marches in Nijmegen.
Photo: Ger Loeffen Fotografie, Beuningen, The Netherlands.



Receiving the Four Days Marches cross upon successful completion of the marches.
Photo: Ger Loeffen Fotografie, Beuningen, The Netherlands.

Four Days Marches: more frequent mobile checks

Four dynamic checkpoint teams out and about every day

Fewer 'fixed' checkpoints and more frequent random checks en route. Several significant changes have been made to the system ensuring the regulations are enforced for the 99th Four Days Marches. These changes are aimed at making checks more efficient, but they are also expected to increase compliance with the regulations.

Up to and including the 2014 Four Days Marches, there were four, or sometimes five, static or 'fixed' checkpoints along the route each day. That figure will be cut back to just two with effect from this year. The number of checkpoints will be announced in advance by the organisation, but their location will not. At the static checkpoints, a team of around 45 volunteers from Stichting DE 4DAAGSE's Checkpoint Department will check that day's checkpoint card for all individual, military and group participants.

Trials with dynamic or mobile checkpoints during previous editions of the Four Days Marches were successful, so this method has become a permanent feature of the Checkpoint Department's duties as of this year. Four mobile teams, each consisting of four experienced Checkpoint Department members, have been put together to perform this task and will monitor compliance with the applicable regulations.

Not a witch-hunt

The regulations are re-established by the board of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE every year and they lay down a number of logical rules. "We are certainly not intending to go on a witch-hunt after participants," explains board member Wim Velings. "But we do want everyone to stick to the normal rules, which are in keeping with sporting behaviour and more generally accepted standards and values."

The regulations enable us to take action against walkers who walk the wrong route, whether or not they realise they are doing so, or who feel that they do not need to walk the regulation distance. We will also monitor the use of sticks (including walking sticks), the presence of trolleys/carts and pets on the route, 'decency' when it comes to clothing and the display of advertisements.

Bicycle or taxi

These are not the only 'violations' the dynamic teams will be checking at random along the routes. "Failure to walk the specified route is something we need to keep an eye on," explains Victor van den Hurk, Head of the Checkpoint Department. "We come across the strangest situations in practice. Walkers cycling, for instance. We've even seen participants getting in a taxi."

The organisers of the Four Days Marches appreciate that most 'violators' are not committing grievous sins, but they do cause irritation to most other walkers and are not very sporting. A yellow card will be given for minor violations, while disqualification will be the punishment for more serious cases.

Toilet stops

Board member Wim Velings says that mobile checkpoint officials have also been tasked with tackling walkers who use gardens and shrubbery along the route for toilet stops, despite the almost 400 toilets put in place every day by Stichting DE 4DAAGSE. "Unfortunately, we receive a lot of complaints from residents about this sort of bad behaviour. We hope that in deploying our mobile teams we will be able to prevent such incidents."

The 'weighing team' that was only responsible for checking the weight of military participants' marching kit in previous years has now been integrated into the dynamic teams.

Four Days Marches touched by Sunset March

Four Days Marches detachments over the 'Waal Crossing' together with veterans

Touched by the homage paid every day by Dutch veterans to the allied soldiers who fought for Dutch freedom 70 years ago, a group of Four Days Marches veterans and foreign military detachments will take part in the Sunset March during the week of the Four Days Marches.

The Sunset March has taken place since 19 October 2014, not long after the opening of the new 'Waal Crossing' bridge to the west of Nijmegen. The 99th Four Days Marches is the first edition since that date.

"We think this is a brilliant initiative and we feel that having Four Days Marches participants join in will help to commemorate the heroic acts of the Americans in September 1944," explains Johan Willemstein, chairman of Stichting Internationale Vierdaagse Afstandsmarsen Nijmegen.

Stichting DE 4DAAGSE is 'supplying' veterans from its own organisation who have been deployed in various roles on foreign missions by the Dutch Ministry of Defence. In addition, the organisers of the Four Days Marches have invited commanders from the American, Canadian, English and French military delegations to also send walkers to take part in the Sunset March.

All delegation leaders responded positively, although the Americans are unable to take part for reasons of security. Veterans will lead the Sunset March participants over the Waal Crossing, accompanied by detachments from a different allied country each evening from Monday 20 to Thursday 23 July. Discussions are still being held as to which country will walk the Sunset March on which day.

Participants in the Sunset March during the week of the Four Days Marches will gather 20 minutes before sunset each evening at the car park on the south side of the bridge. The slow march, keeping pace with the illumination of the 48 pairs of lamp posts on the bridge, will last around 12 minutes and will finish on the north side of the bridge with a salute of honour at the monument there. The Last Post will also be sounded to mark the occasion.

Attachment

Source: www.sunsetmarch.nl

The Sunset March is a daily homage to the allied soldiers who fought for Dutch freedom. A new bridge, the Waal Crossing, has been built in Nijmegen near the section of the River Waal that the American soldiers from the US 82nd Airborne division crossed northwards on 20 September 1944. 48 soldiers lost their lives during the 'Waal Crossing'. The new bridge has very special lighting, consisting of 48 pairs of lamp posts, which switch on around sunset pair by pair at the speed of a slow march. It takes around 12 minutes for all lamp posts to switch on. The first pair to switch on is under the southern arch of the bridge, the upside-down V.*

A veteran walks the Sunset March every day at sunset. Once the first pair of lamp posts has switched on, the veteran starts to march, keeping pace with the lamp posts. The veteran can be recognised by his beret, his veteran's badge and/or the medals he is wearing. Any veteran can sign up to perform this task through the Register of assignments on this website. The Sunset March is an initiative of the Overbetuwe veterans.

Facts and Figures for the 99th Four Days Marches

(based on a total of 46,000 participants registered, including military participants, as of 2 July 2015)

1. Barometer for the 99th Four Days Marches

Registration period	2014	%	2015	%
Total number of registrations	53.844	100%	51.462	100%
People eliminated by draw	7.844	14,6%	5.462	10,6%
Added after cancellations		N/A		N/A
Four Days Marches	2014		2015	
Number of registrations	46.000	100%	46.000	100%
No-shows	2.987	6,49%		
Signed in	43.013	100%		
Withdrawals/non-starters on 1st day	715	*) 1,66%		
Finishers on 1st day	42.298	100%		
Withdrawals/non-starters on 2nd day	1.188	2,81%		
Finishers on 2nd day	41.110	100%		
Withdrawals/non-starters on 3rd day	973	2,37%		
Finishers on 3rd day	40.137	100%		
Withdrawals/non-starters on 4th day	227	0,57%		
Four Days Marches finishers	39.910	92,79%		
Withdrawal percentage**	3.103	**) 7,21%		

(* percentages based on number of starters each day); (** withdrawal percentage based on number of starters on 1st day)

2. Number of military participants

The number of military participants registered is 5,000, of which 4,362 are men and 638 are women. 1,759 of them are Dutch and 3,241 have a different nationality.

3. Number of nationalities

A total of 6,127 (13.32%) people (4,822 men and 1,305 women) registered have a nationality other than Dutch.

There are participants of 60 different nationalities:

Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Surinam, Sweden, Switzerland,

Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

4. Youngest and oldest participants

Of the people registered for the 99th Four Days Marches, 445 were born in 2003 and have turned/will turn 12 years old in 2015. 245 of them are boys and 200 are girls.

The youngest participant in the 2015 Four Days Marches is Sjoerd van de Laar from Velp near Grave. He will turn 12 on 30 December. The second youngest participants are Niek Janssen from Meijel (Limburg), Bor IJlst from Spijk (Gelderland) and Maaïke Luijnenburg from Nieuwkoop. All three of them will turn 12 on 29 December. Maaïke is the youngest girl to take part in the 99th Four Days Marches.

The youngest foreign participant is 11-year-old Max Endrizzi, who is from the USA but lives in Groesbeek. The youngest foreign girl is Brazilian Esmée Jamira de Meijer from São Paulo. The youngest participant to walk the 50-kilometre distance is Reinder Hoogeveen (12) from the Frisian village of Ureterp.

Both aged 92, the oldest participants in the 99th Four Days Marches are Mr Herman Dubie of Amsterdam and Mr Jan Zwijnen of Huizen. Mr Dubie is six weeks older than Mr Zwijnen. Mr Yrjö Saraste (91) from Helsinki, Finland, is the oldest foreign participant. Mrs Truus Verhaegh (88) of Velden near Venlo and Mrs Yvonne den Haerijnck (86) from the Belgian village of Koewacht are the oldest women.

Of the people registered for the 99th Four Days Marches, 7 men were born before 01/01/1926 and have turned/will turn 90 years old in 2015. No women born before 01/01/1926 have registered. 326 participants were born between 01/01/1926 and 31/12/1935 and will therefore celebrate a birthday in their 80s in 2015. 265 of them are men and 61 are women.

5. Oldest first-time entrants (m/f) from the Netherlands and from abroad in 2015

The oldest first-time entrant registered for the 99th Four Days Marches is 82-year-old Mr ArendJan Uil of Heiligerlee. He will be taking part in the 30-kilometre event. The oldest first-time entrant from abroad is 77-year-old Mrs Mildrid Solemsli from Saupstad in Norway. She will also be walking the 30-kilometre distance. The oldest first-time entrant in the 50-kilometre event is Mr Adri van Senten (71) from Vleuten.

6. Record walkers and anniversaries

Bert van der Lans (83) of Nijmegen will be trying to secure his 68th Four Days Marches Cross in 2015. He will walk the 30-kilometre distance. Dick Koopman (84) of Oudorp (Noord-Holland) is hoping to achieve his 66th Four Days Marches Cross in the 30km event, which will be this year's second highest reward. No less than 15 participants (13 males, 2 females) are going for their 50th Four Days Marches Cross. Two of the men are from Switzerland.

7. Number of people going for

Reward 10: 1,493 participants (570 females, 923 males)

Reward 25: 248 participants (77 females, 171 males)

Reward 40: 42 participants (5 females, 37 males)

Reward 50: 15 participants (2 females, 13 males)

Reward 51: 6 participants (1 female, 5 males)

Reward 52: 7 participants (2 females, 5 males)

Reward 53: 9 participants (1 female, 8 males)

Reward 54: 6 participants (2 females, 4 males)

Reward 55: 1 participant (1 male)

Reward 56: 0 participants

Reward 57: 4 participants (4 males)

Reward 58: 0 participants

Reward 59: 1 participant (1 male)

Reward 60: 0 participants

Reward 61: 0 participants

Reward 62: 0 participants

Reward 63: 0 participants

Reward 64: 0 participants

Reward 65: 0 participants

Reward 66: 1 participant (1 male)

Reward 67: 0 participants
Reward 68: 1 participant (1 male)

8. Age spread on 2 July 2015

Age category	Registrations	Percentage
11 - 20	2.948	6,41%
21 - 30	5.531	12,02%
31 - 40	4.225	9,18%
41 - 50	6.105	13,27%
51 - 60	11.590	25,20%
61 - 70	11.722	25,48%
71 - 80	3.639	7,91%
81 - 90	234	0,51%
91 - 100	6	0,01%

9. Gender spread (total 46,000, including military participants, as of 2 July 2015)

Of all 46,000 people currently registered, 27,139 (=59%) are male and 18,861 (=41%) are female.

10. Numbers for each distance (46,000, including military participants, as of 2 July 2015)

Individual civilian registrations: 39,171

30km (individual) = 11,907 (=30.4%)

40km (individual) = 19,232 (=49.1%)

50km (individual) = 8,032 (=20.5%)

Civilian group registrations: 1,829 participants

30km (group) = 99 (=5.4%)

40km (group) = 1,054 (=57.6%)

50km (group) = 676 (=37%)

Military individual registrations: 1,350 participants

30km (individual) = 0

40km (individual) = 454 (=33.6%)

40km (individual + marching kit) = 896 (=66.4%)

50km (individual) = 0

Military group registrations: 3,650 participants

30km (group) = 0

40km (group) = 925 (=25.3%)

40km (group + marching kit) = 2,725 (=74.7%)

50km (group) = 0

11. First-time entrants

The number of civilian participants registered for reward 1 is 6,356 (=70.2%). The number of military participants registered for reward 1 is 2,695 (=29.8%).

12. Number of participants in a wheelchair

There will be 15 participants in a wheelchair in 2015.

13. Via Vierdaagse

1,500 people have registered through the Koninklijke Wandel Bond Nederland's (KWBN) Via Vierdaagse training programm.

14. KWBN members

14,356 KWBN members have registered for the 99th Four Days Marches.

15. Total number of (successful) participants

Barometers up to and including 2015 put the total number of people ever to have registered for the Four Days Marches at 1,700,300. The total number of people to have completed the Four Days Marches up to and including 2014 is 1,490,218.

16. Number of participants from each Dutch province

Drenthe: total 807 participants, 439 men and 368 women

Flevoland: total 583 participants, 358 men and 225 women

Friesland: total 790 participants, 427 men and 363 women

Gelderland: total 11,315 participants, 6,394 men and 4,921 women

Groningen: total 644 participants, 336 men and 308 women

Limburg: total 2,207 participants, 1,253 men and 954 women

Noord-Brabant: total 7,787 participants, 4,248 men and 3,539 women

Noord-Holland: total 3,575 participants, 2,036 men and 1,539 women

Overijssel: total 2,174 participants, 1,206 men and 968 women

Utrecht: total 2,439 participants, 1,439 men and 1,000 women

Zeeland: total 669 participants, 372 men and 297 women

Zuid-Holland: total 6,043 participants, 3,404 men and 2,639 women

17. Number of participants from each en-route town, based on postcode

Nijmegen, 6500 - 6546: 2,292 participants, of which 1,255 men and 1,037 women

Elst, 6660 - 6662: 331 participants, of which 185 men and 146 women

Wijchen, 6600 - 6605: 570 participants, of which 309 men and 261 women

Groesbeek, 6560 - 6562: 264 participants, of which 155 men and 109 women

Cuijk, 5430 - 5432: 229 participants, of which 139 men and 90 women

Arnhem, 6800 - 6846: 669 participants, of which 402 men and 267 women

Beuningen, 6640 - 6642: 292 participants, of which 179 men and 113 women

Grave, 5360 - 5361: 117 participants, of which 62 men and 55 women

Malden, 6580 - 6581: 261 participants, of which 157 men and 104 women

Press release 2015.023, 17 July

Customers vote on new '100th shoe'

Hi-Tec Sports involves walkers in developing special shoe

Inspired by the saying 'If the shoe fits, wear it', the main Four Days Marches sponsor, Hi-Tec Sports, would like walkers to have the final say on the design of their new walking shoe, 'The 100th,' that is yet to be launched.

Over the last six months, Hi-Tec has secretly been developing a special walking shoe for the 100th Four Days Marches, taking place in 2016. The shoe is designed to meet the latest standards in comfort and quality. Before deciding on the final design in terms of colour and other details, Hi-Tec footwear developers are waiting for the results of a vote by the people who wear their sports and walking shoes.

The 'election campaign' will be announced and launched during a meeting of associates on Monday 20 July, on the eve of the start of the 99th Vierdaagse. A model of 'The 100th' will also be shown at the launch, when more specifications will be revealed. The choice Hi-Tec would like its customers to make will also be explained then.

Contract renewal

Hi-Tec Sports and Stichting DE 4DAAGSE will also sign a new sponsorship agreement during the meeting. The international sportswear brand is so pleased to be involved with The Walk of the World that the current sponsorship contract, due to expire in 2016, will already be renewed up to and including 2019. This will set Stichting DE 4DAAGSE up with an ambitious, international main sponsor for the next five years.

More than 1,000 musicians performing at the 99th Walk of the World

The Four Days Marches more musical than ever

With over 1,000 musicians giving a total of almost 130 performances at 54 venues over seven days, the 99th Four Days Marches is set to be more musical than ever. The 'silent Entry' of 2014 and the big anniversaries celebrated by the Netherlands Marine Corps (350 years) and the German Bundeswehr (60 years) will all leave their mark on the musical atmosphere of the 2015 Four Days Marches.

As a mark of respect to the victims of the MH17 disaster and their relatives, it was decided that it would be most appropriate for last year's Entry to take place in silence. "We are even more confident in hindsight that we made the right decision under the circumstances," reflects March Coordinator, Johan Willemstein. "It was tough for the walkers, the spectators and of course the musicians themselves, but it was a poignant tribute all the same."

Pulling out all the stops

This year will well and truly make up for the lack of music at the 2014 Entry. Since the Netherlands Marine Corps is celebrating its 350th anniversary and the 60th anniversary of the German Bundeswehr will also be marked during the Four Days Marches, the musicians from the two organisations are going to pull out all the stops to bring some musical splendour to the 99th Four Days Marches. Both the entire Marine Band of the Royal Netherlands Navy and the Heeresmusikkorps Kassel will put on a spectacular show of music for the walkers and their crowds of supporters during the Entry on Friday 24 July.

Detailed scenario

The 'Vierdaagse Intocht & Muziek' department (Four Days Marches Entry & Music, or VIM for short) is responsible for the musical programme of the Four Days Marches. As early as March each year, the 'VIM' presents a detailed scenario to the board of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE. It is edited on a monthly basis and eventually weekly as the event draws near.

"Sometimes an orchestra cancels at the last minute, because it finds itself short of players during the holidays. Of course, the closer the day, the harder it is to find a replacement. In an emergency we have to change the scenario for the Entry a bit," says Theo Jetten, who arranges bands for the Four Days Marches on behalf of the VIM Committee.

The musical might of the Four Days Marches gets under way this year on Saturday 18 July, when Nijmegen's festival band, 'Uit de Dak', has the honour of performing at the Four Days Marches Executive Committee's official opening meeting. 'Uit de Dak' has roughly 15 members and has won several prizes for its performances.

Reserve list

The VIM Committee's motto is 'Wherever the Four Days Marches is, there is music'. This means that musical performances will be organised to take place when people check in for the Four Days Marches at De Wedren, during each start and finish at Camp Heumensoord, on various stages along the route every day, and of course when the walkers return to De Wedren in the afternoon.

A whole host of bands and solo artists are due to perform at the 99th Four Days Marches, from groups of 60 musicians - both military and civilian - to the DJ duo, 'Wipneus en Pim'. The VIM has a reserve list of oompah bands for this week, as it is harder to secure larger groups during the summer.

[in text box]

The Marine Band also has something to celebrate

One of the many ways the Marine Band of the Royal Netherlands Navy will be celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Marine Corps, as well as the 70th anniversary of the band itself, is by releasing a special CD of marching music.

The CD will be released on Tuesday 21 July when the Marine Band performs on the Four Days Marches stage on Cuijk's Maaskade. Since the CD consists entirely of marching music, the Four Days Marches is of course the ideal occasion for the presentation.

To give the anniversary celebrations of the Marine Corps even more of a boost, exactly 350 members of the Dutch navy will complete the Four Days Marches together, walking the Entry on Friday 24 July as one block. The block will also include a detachment of the 'Contact Oud-Mariniers' association, which we will be taking part for the 30th time this year. One member of the association is 81 year-old Mr Damen from Bommel.

Several Fifes & Drums of the Marine Corps will be walking the whole Four Days Marches with their instruments, while the Steel Band will be performing on several occasions during the week too.

End of press release

Note for editorial staff:

For more information, please visit www.4daagse.nl or get in touch with André Sonnevile, Communications Department, Tel. +31 (0)651 605212 or email communicatie@4daagse.nl

More information about the Marine Band of the Royal Netherlands Navy is available from: Ewold J. S. de Bruijne, bc. luitenant ter zee der eerste klasse (sd) KMR, Tel. +31 (0)6 182 603 52

Press release 2015.027, 24 July 2015

Royally approved decoration presented for the 1.5 millionth time

Four Days Marches Cross shines all the more brightly for Anne

The 99th Four Days Marches saw the presentation of the 1.5 millionth Four Days Marches reward. Anne Timmermans (14) from Ubbergen was the lucky walker. She received the reward at 12.48pm from Mr Ton Thomassen, Stichting DE 4DAAGSE's Head of Financial Affairs, at start/finish location De Wedren.

Anne was extremely surprised and delighted to be recognised in such a special way. "The Four Days Marches is already such a great party, but this makes it really and truly fantastic!" She has completed the Four Days Marches three times (30km) and was accompanied by her father.

Anne crossed the finish line as fit as a fiddle. Asked what she thinks is so great about the Four Days Marches, she replied: "Every day is nice, but the third day - the Day of Groesbeek - is even more special to me, as I pretty much walk past my house then." Desk clerk Marie-Thérèse van Delden had the honour of pinning the number '3' on to Anne's medal. Mr Thomassen was pleasantly surprised to find himself presenting the 1.5 millionth reward to such a young participant: "It's nice to see the next generation of walkers growing." As well as everlasting glory, Anne received a sportswear set from Hi-Tec, the main sponsor of the Four Days Marches. She said that she 'definitely wants to take part again next year!'

Walkers who successfully complete the marches have been presented with a royally approved decoration ever since the first Four Days Marches in 1909. After all, that is what the Four Days Marches Cross is: a reward for demonstrated marching skill.

Press releases - 100th Four Days Marches

Press release 2016.001, 23 October 2013

1,000 days to the start of the 100th Four Days Marches

Special committee is making preparations for memorable anniversary edition

The countdown to the 100th edition of the Four Days Marches has begun. The anniversary edition of the world's biggest multi-day walking event is to be especially festive and memorable. The idea is for the 100th edition to be a 'normal' Four Days Marches in terms of the format. What is certain is that the high hopes entertained by some of a considerably larger number of participants will not be met. Regulations for participation in the 2016 Four Days Marches will be announced in the spring of 2014.

Stichting DE 4DAAGSE has set up a special committee in the form of a foundation that is currently in the process of formation and will be called Stichting Honderdste Vierdaagse (One Hundredth Four Days Marches Foundation) that will be in charge of preparations for the anniversary edition. On 23 October 2013 there were 1,000 days to go to the start of the 100th Four Days Marches, according to calculations by the committee. To mark that date as the official start date of the work of the Stichting Honderdste Vierdaagse, a huge countdown banner was suspended from one of the towers of Nijmegen's De Vereeniging concert hall.

The special date of 23 October 2013 was also taken as the occasion to announce the first plans for the anniversary edition. In general terms, the 2016 edition of the walking achievement event will not differ greatly from previous editions. As always, walkers will set off on their daily 30-kilometre, 40-kilometre or 50-kilometre walk in the third week of July, largely following the same routes as ever.

No 100,000 participants

Expansion of the army of walkers is possible only to a very limited degree. In terms of ensuring the enjoyment and safety of the walkers, the routes are already nearing their maximum capacity. And access to the region and the accommodations for overnight stays are also -under pressure. The organisers are therefore exploring the possibilities of raising the current limit of 46,000 entries by a few thousand.

"Any speculations to that effect that are already doing the rounds now in the world of walking are unfounded. We need time to make a careful and reasonable assessment, and that's why we're calling for patience," said the organisers of the Four Days Marches in a statement.

Over 130 ideas

Over the past period, the organisers have received over 130 highly varied ideas on how to add an extra festive and sporty touch to the 100th Four Days Marches. The approximately 30 suggestions that were selected from these ideas will over the coming period be subjected to a feasibility study. The exact plans will gradually be announced over the coming two years-, although some of the plans will be kept secret up to very last moment. There will in any case be an exhibition about the history of the Four Days Marches. The topic of sus-tainability will also be highlighted in various initiatives, such as the Four Days Marches Forest.

Organisation

Stichting Honderdste Vierdaagse, which is taking care of preparations for the 2016 Four Days Marches, is made up of volunteers who will provide input from the various disciplines they represent. Ron Adriaans, secretary of KNBLO, the Dutch Walking Association, is the chairman. The other members of the committee are Jeannine Liebrand, Anneke Bruisten, Martine Willemstein, Marcel Claassen, Chris Crucq and Bram Brinkman.

A Recommendations Committee will also be set up. As soon as all the seats have been assigned, an announcement will be made of who will sit on the Recommendations Committee.

History of the Four Days Marches

On 3 April 1908, the Dutch Walking Association Nederlandse Bond voor Lichamelijke Opvoeding was founded. One of first things this new association did was to organise a four-day walking event in 1909, which was intended primarily for servicemen and women. Participants could start from any of 15 locations across the Netherlands. 306 walkers took part in that very first edition. Starting in Utrecht, the gradually growing army of walkers was put up at the Prins Hendrik -barracks in Nijmegen on the third day of the 1912 edition, which also finished on the grounds of barracks on the fourth day. It turned out to be a successful experiment, as the walkers were regularly received in Nijmegen in subsequent years-. In 1925, Nijmegen became the Four Days Marches permanent start and finish location.

The Four Days Marches have meanwhile grown into a high-profile sporting phenomenon in the Netherlands, with 46,000 entries every year, approximately 1 million people lining the routes, and many more following the event through the media.

100th Four Days Marches open to maximum of 50,000

Advantage in 2016 registration for walkers who participated persistently from 2010

The maximum number of registrations will be increased to 50,000 exclusively for the 100th Four Days Marches in 2016. Walkers who have successfully completed the Four Days Marches at least four times between 2010 and 2015 will be guaranteed a starting ticket for the 100th edition. Civilian groups will also need to have walked the Four Days Marches as a group at least four times within this period. Participants aged 12 to 15 inclusive and first-time entrants registering through the Via Vierdaagse training and support programme will also be guaranteed a starting ticket.

Based on figures for previous years, the board of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE expects to have some 12,000 starting tickets available through the draw to the remaining 'non-exempt' participants. The draw will be weighted for many of these participants, according to the number of Four Days Marches Crosses they have already achieved. Participants excluded by the draw in 2014 and 2015 will also have a weighted, i.e. increased, chance in the draw.

One-off increase

A maximum of 50,000 walkers will be able to take part in the 100th Four Days Marches in 2016, instead of the 46,000 in recent years. This is a one-off increase. Stichting DE 4DAAGSE and its organisational partners – including the 12 Four Days Marches municipalities and the Dutch Ministry of Defence – need to take a range of complex measures in order to guarantee the safety and minimum walking comfort needed on the existing routes for 50,000 participants. It is not possible to make major changes to the route and the organisers will have their hands full keeping the army of 50,000 walkers moving in 2016.

Children

Stichting DE 4DAAGSE has opted to give the youngest participants preferential treatment, since "children are the future". Participants who turn twelve years old in the year that they walk the Four Days Marches have been exempt from the draw for years now, with some 400 new young walkers taking part each year as a result.

In due course, Stichting DE 4DAAGSE will specify the rules governing registration for the 100th Four Days Marches in a protocol. The key provisions of this protocol are being published now so as to prevent further speculation about the possibilities of guaranteed participation in 2016.

Trees planted for 100th Four Days Marches in 2016

Four Days Marches forest makes march routes even greener

The 'Four Days Marches forest' was unveiled on Friday 4 April 2014 in Park Lingezege, along the route of the first marching day of the Nijmegen Four Days Marches. The anniversary slogan for the hundredth Four Days Marches in 2016 has also been revealed - 'Wie wandelt wordt honderd' (Those who walk will turn 100).

The 100th edition of the Four Days Marches will be held in 2016 and will be even more festive than usual. A special committee has been preparing the anniversary activities for almost two years now. Following on from the celebration on 23 October 2013 (1,000 days to go to the 100th), the presentation of the Four Days Marches forest is the second milestone on the way to 2016. The young trees will grow into a beautiful forest in Park Lingezege, Overbetuwe municipality, over the next two years. The period of growth represents the build-up to the anniversary's climax - the start of the 100th Four Days Marches on 19 July 2016.

Green route

Walking and nature go hand in hand, and it is key for Four Days Marches participants to be able to enjoy a nice green route around Nijmegen. This is why the anniversary committee got in touch with Park Lingezege, situated between Nijmegen and Arnhem. The park's organisers were full of enthusiasm for the idea of a 'Four Days Marches forest'.

A location has been selected in the park along the route of the 'Day of Elst', on the corner of Breedlersestraat and Kattenleger, and the forest's first trees were planted there on the Netherlands' version of Arbor Day, 'Nationale Boomfeestdag', in March 2014.

Ecological stepping stone

The Four Days Marches forest has an area of around 2.5 hectares and contains thousands of trees, ranging from willow, poplar, oak, sweet cherry, hornbeam and hawthorn, to dog rose, alder buckthorn and one apple tree. The designers of the Four Days Marches forest, Jan Heersche and Astrid Harsveld of the Ministry of Economic Affairs' Government Service for Land and Water Management, also see the forest as an ecological stepping stone for the poplar admiral butterfly, which they hope will eventually start to inhabit the area between the Rhine and Waal.

A bench for walkers to rest on has also been placed next to the Four Days Marches forest. Flanked by a walnut tree, the bench was a gift from Stichting DE 4DAAGSE to Park Lingezege. Walkers will be encouraged through Four Days Marches media sources to help maintain 'their' forest.

Sustainability

As part of its sustainability measures (CO2 reduction), Stichting DE 4DAAGSE is planning to facilitate new green areas at several points along the route over the next few years. They will look for suitable sites, in consultation with the municipalities the route passes through. The 'Four Days Marches vineyard' was already planted at winery De Colonjes in Groesbeek in 2013. The two thousand vines that were planted will hopefully produce the first 'Four Days Marches wine' in the anniversary year 2016.

Anniversary slogan and Recommendations Committee

The Four Days Marches forest was opened with the unveiling of a large sign bearing the anniversary slogan 'Wie wandelt wordt honderd' (Those who walk will turn 100). All other anniversary activities will also be presented with this motto. Members of the Recommendations Committee formed to support the anniversary committee unveiled the sign.

All sectors that are important for the Four Days Marches are represented in the Recommendations Committee:

Province of Gelderland: Clemens Cornielje, King's Commissioner in Gelderland.

Nijmegen City Council: Hubert Bruls, Mayor.

Dutch Ministry of Defence: Peter van Uhm, former Commander of the Armed Forces.

Health-care sector: Cathy van Beek, member of UMC St Radboud's Executive Board.

Sponsoring: Teun Verheij, Managing Director of Albron.

Sport: Olga Commandeur, former athlete and sport presenter.

Tourism: Jurriaan de Mol, Managing Director of Regiomarketing Gelderland.

Four Days Marches participants can opt to walk 55km

A special one-off 55km route will be open to walkers in 2016 to mark the 100th edition of the International Four Days Marches Nijmegen. The 55km route is an extended distance, and the existing 30, 40 and 50km routes will still apply.

Earlier this week, the board of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE gave the green light for the extended 55km route. Mayor Luciën van Riswijk of Druten was the first to be informed of the decision by a special delegation of board members. Druten has organised various fun activities in recent years, with a view to being able to welcome walkers again during the 100th Four Days Marches in 2016.

Participants will pass through Druten on the second day, the Day of Wijchen and Beuningen, making Druten the thirteenth official Four Days Marches en-route municipality for one year only in 2016. Talks will be held with Druten over the next few months to determine the best way to tackle traffic and safety issues. The other en-route municipalities will also be involved in the talks. The extensions for the 55km distance have currently been planned for Driel (municipality of Overbetuwe, Day of Elst), Groesbeek (municipality of Berg and Dal, Day of Groesbeek) and Beers (municipality of Cuijk, Day of Cuijk).

Up until 1966, 55km was the regulation distance for men aged between 19 and 50 taking part in the Four Days Marches. This time, anyone can opt for this distance. The board of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE decided to reintroduce the distance for one year only based on recommendations from Stichting 100ste Vierdaagse, which is preparing the festivities for the 100th edition in 2016, as well as from the Association of Holders of the Four Days Marches Gold Cross and other parties.

Registration of Dutch military participants for the 100th edition

Same rules as for civilians

Dutch military participants will be subject to the same registration rules as civilian participants for the 100th Four Days Marches in 2016.

Individual military participants must have successfully completed the Four Days Marches four times during the period from 2010 to 2015 inclusive in order to be guaranteed a military starting ticket in 2016. Military detachments must have taken part in the Four Days Marches as a detachment at least four times during the same period. Detachments must consist of at least eleven participants, and no more than the average number with which they took part between 2010 and 2015. If not all of the available starting tickets can be issued under these regulations, a draw will be held among participants who do not meet the requirement.

The Dutch Ministry of Defence and Stichting DE 4DAAGSE came to an agreement on the registration protocol for the 2016 Four Days Marches just before the start of the 99th edition. In making these agreements, the Ministry of Defence remains in line with the registration protocol that Stichting DE 4DAAGSE previously drew up for individual civilian participants and groups.

"We are delighted to now be able to announce the procedure for next year's military registrations. All military participants concerned are currently in Nijmegen, so we can let them know which registration regulations apply to them," explains Johan Willemstein, Chairman of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE.

Next month, Stichting DE 4DAAGSE will contact the military detachments that took part four times between 2010 and 2015. "We need to check whether our administrative records for them are correct and we also want to consult with them to establish the average number of participants," says Willemstein. "This way, both the detachments and we, the organisation, will know the maximum number of participants that can be registered in 2016 well ahead of schedule."

These rules also apply to international military participants who are part of the 'small contingents'. International military participants from the 'delegation countries' are subject to the usual registration rules, which are based on maximum participant numbers agreed with Stichting DE 4DAAGSE. The delegation countries are Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, Canada, France and the Scandinavian countries.

100th Four Days Marches to get special 'Lap of Honour'

100 Four Days Marches walkers set to walk 5x50 kilometres in 2016

To give the 100th Four Days Marches in 2016 that extra bit of sparkle, and above all to highlight the event's sporting nature, a total of 100 walkers will walk 100 kilometres on one of the four days.

This additional 50-kilometre lap will honour the participants, walking as a sport and the Four Days Marches in a way that will be never be forgotten. As a 'Lap of Honour', 100 selected participants will be given the unique opportunity of taking on this extraordinary once-in-a-lifetime challenge. A different group of 25 walkers will complete this special tour de force on each of the four days.

Through the night

Participants in this 'Lap of Honour' will initially walk the 50-kilometre route on the evening before the four regular marching days. Upon arrival back in Nijmegen, the 25 'Lap of Honour walkers' will have a short rest during the night and then walk the route again at the same time as the other 50-kilometre walkers – this time as individual participants. They will also walk as individual participants on the other three days.

Diversity

The composition of the 'Lap of Honour group' will change from day to day. "The diversity of the 'Lap of Honour walkers' will reflect the sheer variety of participants in the 100 editions of the Four Days Marches," explains Johan Willemstein, Chairman of Stichting DE 4DAAGSE.

One day is for 25 participants who put much of their energy into walking long distances throughout the year, while another day will see 25 uniformed walkers from the Dutch Ministry of Defence, the police, the fire services and customs. A third day has been set aside for 25 international participants, and the fourth group will probably be made up of Dutch celebrities and current and former sports personalities. "But the groups will definitely also feature 'average' Four Days Marches walkers," emphasises Willemstein.

By invitation only

It is not possible to sign up for the 'Lap of Honour'. People from the various groups will be specially invited by the organisers of the Four Days Marches. The health, safety and comfort of the 100-kilometre walkers will be carefully monitored both in the run up to and during the 'Lap of Honour'. During the Entry of the 100th Four Days Marches on Friday 22 July 2016, all 100 participants of the 'Lap of Honour' will walk the last few kilometres along Via Gladiola and past the grandstands together. As an extra reward, the 100-kilometre walkers will receive an exclusive 'Lap of Honour' badge and certificate.