50 YEARS A.HAK

What started in 1963 as a local Dutch pipeline construction company, quickly grew out to become an internationally renowned firm, with locations all across the world and a broad service portfolio. In 2013, this still growing family company celebrated its 50 year anniversary while looking forward to a promising future.

This book reflects on this half-century's worth of history. It contains stories, anecdotes and contributions from the staff and directors of the individual A.Hak companies, but also an abundance of unique photographic material that was collected over the years.

It is a book that is written for all those involved with A.Hak, but most of all for our former and current staff, partners and relations, who made this firm into what it is today.

a.hak

GIVING IT OUR ALL

50
YEARS A.HAK
giving it our all

50

YEARS A.HAK

giving it our all

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Preamble

In the months prior to this publication, I have immersed myself in the history of A.Hak to write this story. A word of gratitude goes out to the editorial boards of the company magazines aimed at staff and relations, as their invaluable work ensured that history is still accessible today. A special word also goes out to Xaf Hendriksen, who has been an incredible support as he recreated the history before 1980 and was able to answer virtually every question.

While creating this book, choices were made and for every published name, story or event, dozens of others had to be left out. I do want to stress that the contributions to A.Hak's success story made by these colleagues, partners, relations and clients were just as important and valuable.

Although A.Hak is a firm that is based on Dutch roots, its history would certainly not have become this interesting without its many international adventures all across the globe. Publishing this English version, aimed at our valued international colleagues, partners and clients, is therefore only logical.

For translator Dennis Gerritse, it was often a daunting task to convert 50 years of often typical Dutch history and context to another language and across different cultural interpretations. While reading this book, you will learn of towns and cities that you may have never heard of before, let alone be able to pronounce.

Nevertheless, this book is certainly worth reading, as it proves that no distance is too large and cultures never differ too much, for people to cooperate and achieve great results together. I hope that every reader of this book will proudly reflect on his or her contribution to half a century of A.Hak history.

RICHARD VAN SANTEN
Communications Manager

PRIOR HISTORY: TRANSPORT AND CRANE RENTALS

Post-war reconstruction as a catalyst

The story of A.Hak officially begins in 1963, but its framework is created decades before that moment. The Second World War played an important part in it. One could say that this conflagration, more particularly the period that followed after it, created the ground work for this story. Arie Hak, the founder and namesake of the firm, recognised the challenges of the post-war reconstruction and rolled up his sleeves.

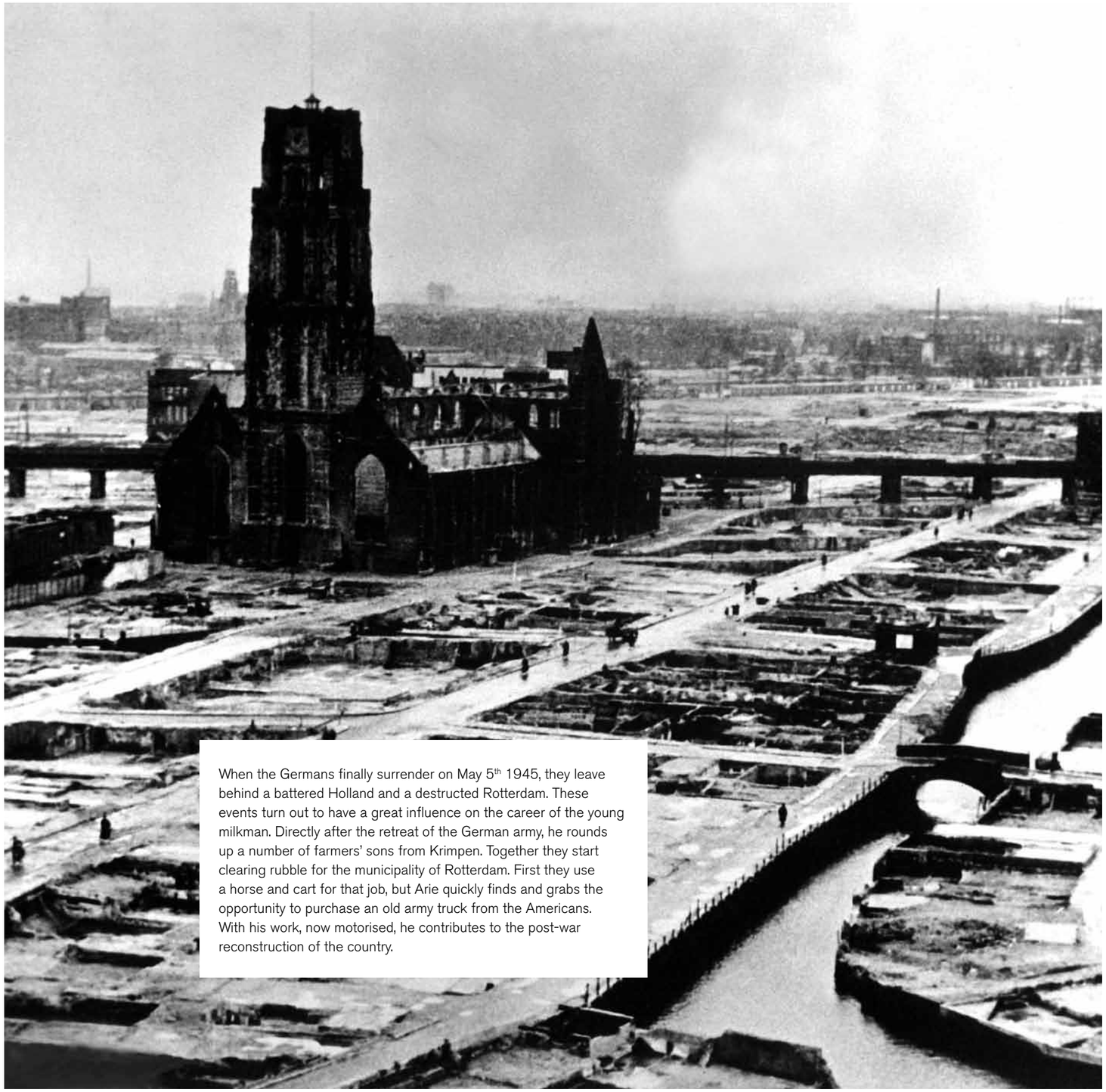
Arie Hak as a milkman with a horse and cart.

Before Europe would explode into violence, Arie Hak is born on August 20th 1923. He comes into being in the quiet Dutch town Krimpen aan de Lek, not far from Rotterdam. The second son of a cattle farmer receives his secondary school diploma in the years before the war and then decides to generate his own source of income. He becomes a milkman with a horse and a cart.

His first self-employed years, a time of great excitement and effort for every entrepreneur, are fully eclipsed by world history that brutally decided things would not be easy. Especially Rotterdam, just a few kilometres away from rural Krimpen, would face incredibly tough years. As soon as the war reaches the Netherlands, on May 14th 1940, the city is heavily bombarded, leading to the surrender of the Dutch armed forces. Something often forgotten, is that Rotterdam was bombed again several times in the years that followed, the so called 'forgotten bombardments'.

WORLD HISTORY
MAY 14TH
1940

GERMAN BOMBS DESTROY THE CITY CENTRE AND OTHER PARTS OF ROTTERDAM.



When the Germans finally surrender on May 5th 1945, they leave behind a battered Holland and a destructed Rotterdam. These events turn out to have a great influence on the career of the young milkman. Directly after the retreat of the German army, he rounds up a number of farmers' sons from Krimpen. Together they start clearing rubble for the municipality of Rotterdam. First they use a horse and cart for that job, but Arie quickly finds and grabs the opportunity to purchase an old army truck from the Americans. With his work, now motorised, he contributes to the post-war reconstruction of the country.

The work done in Rotterdam in the years after the war is, as in the rest of the Netherlands, paid for by the American liberators. As part of the Marshall Plans, Europe receives the, certainly for those times astronomical, amount of 12.4 billion US dollars between 1948 and 1952. The original plan was that the first eighty percent was to be a gift while the remaining twenty percent was considered a loan. Years later, the U.S. decided that this latter part would also be deemed a gift. Arie Hak's army truck however, was not a gift at all; it is his first post war investment and will surely not be the last. He quickly expands his operations with excavators, lifting cranes and employees. The foundations for A.Hak Transport are created, later complemented with A.Hak Kraanverhuur (crane rentals).

WORLD HISTORY

1948-1952

MARSHALL PLANS.

After years of reconstruction work, at the end of the fifties and throughout the early sixties, Holland still is a country of long working hours and low paychecks. A severe and nationwide housing shortage exists and many Dutch families are making ends meet on nearly impossible budgets. Most people only heat up one room in their house and use coal, peat and domestically produced oil to do so. During the Second World War, staff of Dutch BPM oil company discover oil reserves close to the town of Schoonebeek. This discovery is kept secret to ensure the Germans would not take the spoils. That is no longer required in 1947 and the BPM firm is merged into the NAM, then already producing more than 1.25 million barrels annually. The latter firm, short for 'Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij' (Dutch Oil Company, 50% Esso and 50% Shell) makes a major discovery in 1948, when a significant natural gas reserve is found in the northern town of Coevorden. Natural gas will prove to be a turning point for the Netherlands to become a prosperous nation, although the Coevorden supply is not large enough to support that by itself. Eleven years later, in 1959, a much bigger gas reserve is found even more up north. Knowing what we know now, this gas bubble in the town of Slochteren near Groningen had an estimated size of an astonishing 2,800 million cubic metres.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1959

THE DISCOVERY OF GIGANTIC GAS FIELDS IN SLOCHTEREN CHANGES THE DUTCH ECONOMY.

A.Hak soon became one of just a few companies able to transport large diameter pipelines

In the early sixties the Netherlands are only beginning to slightly benefit from these natural gas discoveries. However, the transport and rental company A.Hak has quietly grown further. In 1962 the company owns seventy Atlas grapples. During the reconstruction years, they were pretty much constantly leased out to the Rotterdam municipality, who used them during reconstruction works in the city and the renewal of underground infrastructure. The transport capacity was gradually expanded and A.Hak quickly became one of a handful of companies able to transport pipes with a large diameter. Tasks included the shipment of large concrete pipes from the locally famous Bonna factory, to drinking water construction sites throughout the city. These pipes were unloaded by hand and then lowered into the trench.

INTERVIEW
GERRIT DE BIE FIRST MACHINIST

‘A new excavator was delivered before I knew it’

‘Farmers and horticulturists in the Ridderkerk area weren’t always too happy with Arie Hak. There was a great need for personnel able to handle excavators and tractors in the sixties. As a result, a lot of farmworkers switched to our company, leaving the farmers empty-handed’, 79 year old first operator Gerrit de Bie remembers.

‘I started in 1962, working on an Atlas, a simple agricultural tractor with a hydraulic crane. In my first years I mostly worked on projects in the Rotterdam area, helping in underground constructions for water and gas pipelines and sewers.’

‘On a Sunday evening I got a phone call from Arie Hak telling me that the crane was relocated to Ruurlo, almost 175 kilometres away and not too far from the German border, a huge distance at the time. That pretty much announced my first time staying with a guest family. I always had a great time at the firm and could work with the most modern machinery. There was this time when I told Piet Hak that I wasn’t up to working with an old Caterpillar anymore, as I spent more time under it to repair it than actually working. Later that evening I got a phone call, informing me that a new machine was ordered, that’s how we dealt with matters back in the day.

Unloading the pipelines and putting them into the trenches was all done by hand.

WORLD HISTORY

1962

THE CUBA CRISIS ALMOST LEADS TO WORLD WAR III.

INTERVIEW
WIL DIJKSMAN HAS THE LONGEST CAREER

‘I’ll keep doing my job as long as I’m healthy’

In 1962, at the tender age of 15, the now 65 year old Wil Dijksman started his career with simple tasks in the workshop of Arie Hak at the Molendijk Street in Ridderkerk.Throughout the years he grew out to become the foreman of the welding team. He currently works 51 years for the firm and is still highly active. ‘I’ll keep doing my job as long as I’m healthy.’

‘School just wasn’t for me. Four of my brothers already worked for A.Hak, so when I got the opportunity to get a job in the workshop, I didn’t hesitate for a second’, so tells Dijksman in the apartment of his son Richard in Ridderkerk, who also works for the firm. The display cabinet in the bedroom with dozens of miniature excavators and side booms, all with the renowned yellow-green A.Hak logo, shows how involved the family is with the company.
‘At first I only worked on the simple jobs, such as sweeping and repairing hoses. I also damaged quite a few things while driving around, to the despair of ‘boss’ Hak. In 1965 I was sent out to Limburg for the construction of the first 16” pipeline. A.Hak was the main contractor and on Monday he told me “You’re going to Limburg”. At first I really didn’t feel like going, but when I found out my brother was coming with me, I was OK with it. That’s where I first met the ‘fleet welders’. A special kind of people earning incredible amounts of money for that time. I earned 25 Guilders in a week, they went home with 1,600 Guilders! They were driving sports cars even in that time.’

WELDING CREW FOREMAN

The way Arie Hak treated his staff, is still an example for Dijksman. ‘We went out for a job in the far east of the country, a long way from home. So there we see Arie driving up the terrain in his Mercedes, he opens the trunk and lifts a large pan of steaming soup out of it. ‘Well, it cost me five guilders, but you guys give me a lot in return’, he told the superintendent. Whenever I’m travelling for the firm nowadays, the first thing I check is where our people stay. It has to be a proper location, the food must be good as well. Once that is settled, I’ll have a look at the machinery. People always come first, that’s something he certainly taught me.’

INTERNATIONAL CAREER

I actually wanted to become a mechanic, but Arie told me that the pipeline industry would have a great future ahead of it. There was this time I had to stay with the compressor in Limburg. Arie dropped me there at five five o’clock in the morning while it was freezing 20 degrees Celsius. “I’ll be back for you in no time” he told me. Well, he wasn’t, so I spent the night on the compressor to stay warm’, Dijksman reflects on his early years. ‘But he really gave me every opportunity he could. I wasn’t only allowed to attend various courses, but also learned how to work with all machinery. When I turned eighteen I started working on a side boom and at age twenty Arie made me the foreman of the welding crew.’
The individual autonomy and the liberty of creating his own team always spoke to the personal preferences of Dijksman. His career brought him, together with wife Liesbeth and son Richard, from Yugoslavia to Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and numerous other countries.

LOTS OF FUN

‘One of my last projects took place in Iraq. At first we had very little machinery, because everything got stuck in the port. Using a flatcar and an old tractor, we actually managed to get the project going.’
Despite of his 51-year career, earning him the honour of having the longest tenure within the company, he still goes abroad pretty regularly. ‘I’ll head to Saudi Arabia in a couple of weeks. Not for three months as I used to, but I still greatly enjoy starting up new projects together with my son Richard. I’ve also been blessed throughout my life with having a supportive wife. “If your husband goes abroad, you shouldn’t mope”, says Liesbeth. “Otherwise he can’t do his job.” ‘She is an important reason why I was able to do my job for such a long time’, said Wil Dijksman.

Repeating these tasks over and over again must have been the catalyst for Arie Hak to come up with a new plan. He had both the equipment and the people to dig trenches and was lowering pipes inside these trenches time and time again. So why shouldn’t he found his own pipeline firm? This concept became reality on July 3rd 1963 when notary Sander de Groot in Rotterdam ratified the foundation of A.Hak Pijpleidingen N.V., statutory located in the nearby city of Barendrecht. This public company (N.V.) would exist in its form for over ten years, until it was converted to a private company (B.V) on March 28th 1973. Arie Hak hired Johan Engelberts in the role of operational manager and together they would lay the foundation for the pipeline firm.

WORLD HISTORY
NOVEMBER 22ND
1963
ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY.

A.HAK PIJPLEIDINGEN NV

The first decade

1963 is not only the year in which A.Hak Pijpleidingen is founded, as another company emerges that will have an important role in this book: the public company Nederlandse Gasunie. This firm is, up to this very day, responsible for transporting Dutch natural gas. The story of A.Hak Pijpleidingen however, does not start with gas, but rather with water. The very first project carried out by this new firm, was the construction of a steel water pipeline measuring 400 metres in length and 1,600 mm in diameter.

As a newbie in the industry, Hak had to take daring action to conquer a spot of his own and his first projects. He did so by offering a very low price for an upcoming project. The project was contracted for a mere 380,000 Guilders. To provide some perspective, the second cheapest contractor quoted the amount of 585,000 Guilders. Hence, Hak's price was more than 35% lower, and he was awarded the contract. Despite of the low price, the team delivered a perfect job and didn't make a loss. A great first accomplishment for the brand new firm.

The precursor of the current side booms.

WORLD HISTORY
JUNE 12TH
1964
NELSON MANDELA IS CONVICTED TO A LIFE SENTENCE IN PRISON.

The following year had plenty of opportunities in the drinking water business to accommodate further growth. Two steel submerged pipelines (DN 1200) were constructed in the dry beds of the Hartel Channel which was still being excavated. A.Hak Pijpleidingen also constructed a drinking water pipeline from Capelle aan den IJssel to Rotterdam (DN 800). 'DN' is an abbreviation of the French 'diamètre nominel', depicting the diameter in millimetres which is comparable to the North American NPS (Nominal Pipe Size) that is based on inches and thumbs. DN 800 equals 32", while DN 1200 equals 48".

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
1964
CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST 500 KILOMETRES OF GAS TRANSPORT PIPELINES FROM SLOCHTEREN IN THE NORTH TO THE WESTERN AND SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE NETHERLANDS.

INTERVIEW
FOKKE BUIST BUIST SUPERVISOR IN THE EARLY YEARS

‘We did everything together’

‘Back in the sixties, our founder Arie Hak was as busy carrying pumps and hoses on our construction sites as the rest of us. The company was rapidly expanding as the Netherlands switched from oil to gas as its primary fuel within just a couple of years. I’m so exhilarated to have been a witness to and even a participant in this development of the firm’, said 80 year old Fokke Buist, who started as a bulldozer driver in 1963 and promoted all the way up to chief administrator.

‘The invitation to my 50 year anniversary included a picture of me on a machine in Limburg. I was a youngster back then. Time flies, today I´ve been retired for years. At the age of 30 I started as a bulldozer driver. It was the era of natural gas discoveries in the Netherlands, causing everything and everyone to transfer to gas. Throughout my career, I worked in the entire country, from the northernmost tip to the southernmost point in many different projects.’

‘In the first years, we literally did everything ourselves, from constructing dam walls up to drilling and laying the pipelines. We were all-rounders and founder Arie Hak didn’t feel more worthy than the rest of us, he stood there right beside us in the same mud pool, wearing his overall and getting dirty. We really did everything together.’

‘Of course the equipment we used back then, was hardly as modern as it is now. I recall that the side boom with its gasoline engine, which we used to lay the pipelines, wouldn’t start after a very cold night. Once we finally did get it to start, we decided to let it run day and night, something completely uni-maginable nowadays.’

In 1991 I went on an early retirement, but I still keep track of the firm’s developments, I read the A.Hakpark magazine inside out and back again to stay up-to-date and also regularly meet my old colleagues. Recently we all visited the factory of A.Hak company Kaal Masten together, which was fascinating.’

The name Gasunie is found in the records for the first time in 1965. In this and the following year, the first gas pipelines and schematics are constructed for Gasunie Zuid. The pipelines constructed by A.Hak Pijpleidingen also transport kerosene, through an 8” pipeline constructed between Markelo to Dinxperlo.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
1966
DUTCH PARLIAMENT DECIDES TO CLOSE THE COAL MINES.

The year is 1967 when Arie Hak accepts his first cabling project. The construction that goes with this 520,000 Guilder order takes place on the border of the city and the Port of Rotterdam. In this same year, two gas pipelines are constructed. From Rijsbergen to Breda and from Nootdorp to Zoetermeer. Annual revenue now amounts to 4 million Guilders. And although some larger projects are mentioned here, the 1968 financial records show that the firm certainly does not only rely on these large projects alone. In the same year over a hundred smaller projects are completed which roughly contribute equally to the total revenue.

WORLD HISTORY
1969
KING IDRIS OF LIBYA IS OUSTED BY COLONEL GADHAFI. AT THAT TIME, WILLEM VAN GEEN-HUIZEN RESIDED IN LIBYA, HE LEFT EVERYTHING BEHIND AND TRAVELLED BACK TO THE NETHERLANDS IN A HURRY. ALTHOUGH THAT LAST DETAIL IS OF COURSE NOT PART OF WORLD HISTORY, IT’S SURELY WORTH MENTIONING IN THIS REGARD.

JAN ALGERA
In 1947, just after the Second World War, Jan Algera founds the pipeline construction company 'Algera B.V.'. This company was purchased by NBM Leidingbouw in 1950 and grew out to become one of the largest pipeline constructers of yore. When this company on its turn was again acquired in 1971, now by construction company A. in 't Veld & zn. from Voorburg, Jan Algera decided to transfer to A.Hak Pijpleidingen.

The great relations that Jan had with parties such as the NAM, contributed a great deal to the development of A.Hak as a pipeline constructor.

In 1969 another pipeline is constructed for Gasunie, right through the Ooij Polder from Nijmegen to Apeldoorn. In the southern Province of Noord-Brabant, a gas pipeline is constructed adjacent to the Gilze-Breda-Terheyden route.

The first encounter with Shell as a client takes place in 1970. A.Hak constructs pipelines from the river Scheldt to Roosendaal and the Pernis port area. By then, Gasunie became a regular client. In Borssele a 16" gas pipeline is constructed. In the same year A.Hak Pijpleidingen B.V. opens a new location in Born in the southernmost Province of Limburg, led by Jan Stevens.

Just a year later, a third location is opened as well, this time in the town of Hattem. This new presence is led by Harm Dekker, who previously worked at NBM Leidingbouw. Another new name is Jan Algera, who proves to be a great link between A.Hak and the NAM and Gasunie. These developments turn out to be valuable, as the two new locations contribute no less than 13 million Guilders to a total of 19 million revenue. The construction of an 18" brine pipeline from Thorn to the German border near Venlo, as well as a 12" pipeline via Born to Blerick Genoei and a 16" pipeline from Sittard to the Belgian border, projects on behalf of powerhouse DSM, are weighty contributions to this growth.

Construction of a double water pipeline at the Van Brienenoord bridge in Rotterdam.

Work performed by A.Hak Pijpleidingen in the hilly landscape of Limburg.

INTERVIEW
JOSE-HERVAS PAVON & RAFAEL VICENTE SPANISH WELDERS

‘Freezing cold when we arrived in Rotterdam’

‘It was freezing cold when, in the early sixties, we arrived at Rotterdam Central Station on the train from Valencia. The buses of Verolme Shipyard were already waiting to bring us to our guesthouses’, said the welders José Hervas-Pavon and Rafael Vicente who came to Holland together in their early twenties to test their luck.

‘When we arrived here, there was plenty of work for welders, pipefitters and other technically skilled personnel. The economy was growing wildly. We first worked a year for Verolme on a contract basis, but later found out that several refineries and the chemical industry offered even better paying jobs’, recollects the now 75 year old Vicente from his early years in the Netherlands. ‘At the beginning of the seventies, I switched to A.Hak. Shortly after the gas reserves in Slochteren were discovered, there was plenty of work in this industry. I could directly start with the construction of a pipeline in the town of Denekamp for client Gasunie’, so complements the now 76 year old José Hervas Pavon.

‘There was plenty of work in Spain and I could easily earn as much there’, tell Vicente, ‘but I was looking for an adventure and in Spain we lived under the repressive dictatorship of Franco. That certainly wasn’t always easy. That’s why I visited the employment agency in Valencia. I felt like working abroad for some time and had heard that Holland offered various opportunities. They made me complete numerous welding tests which were judged by a panel of experts. Obviously they were satisfied with my work, so a short time later, there I was on a train to Holland.’

‘The company also sent me to various countries’, said José Hervas-Pavon. ‘From Tunisia to Qatar and from Iraq to Saudi Arabia, the international presence of A.Hak allowed me to see a lot of the world.’

‘But we didn’t have much time to really get to know these countries, sometimes we even worked seven days in a row to finish a job within its deadline’, Vicente reacts. ‘Sometimes the equipment wasn’t delivered on time and we had to redouble our efforts to complete the job in time. We did get great employment benefits in return, so all in all, life was pretty good. We both found the love of our lives in the Netherlands and became parents, even grandparents now, something we enjoy every single day.’

INNOVATIONS

1971

A.HAK PURCHASES ITS FIRST MANDREL. THIS DEVICE IS SLID INTO A PIPE AND IS PRESSURISED AGAINST THE INSIDE OF SAID PIPE, TO PREVENT ITS WALL FROM CREASING UPON ITS BENDING.

1972 is another successful year for A.Hak Pijpleidingen. Completed projects include the construction of a 10” oxygen pipeline from Roosendaal to Shell Moerdijk, as well as an 8” fuel oil pipeline from Vlissingen to Borssele, including electric heating and insulation overlaps.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1973

THE OPEC ANNOUNCES AN OIL BOYCOTT AGAINST WESTERN COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE NETHERLANDS FOR THEIR SUPPORT TO ISRAEL DURING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. DIESEL AND GASOLINE ARE RATIONED DUE TO OIL SHORTAGE; CAR FREE SUNDAYS ARE INTRODUCED.

INTERVIEW
BRAM ‘THE BENDER’ **BROUWER**

‘First Dutch bending machine’

‘In the seventies, Hak was the first Dutch company to purchase a special bending machine in the United States. Weighing in at 50 tons, it was a mighty machine that allowed us to bend 48” steel pipes as if it was nothing. The interest people showed in this phenomenon was overwhelming. Reporters, television crews, representatives of key clients such as Gasunie and Shell, everybody wanted to visit our location in Ridderkerk to get a first-hand glimpse of this machine’, said 67 year old Bram ‘the bender’ Brouwer who started working with the firm in 1967 and retired in 2005.

‘In 1973, Gasunie granted us the assignment of constructing 60 kilometres of pipeline. The two trajectories went cross-country from Bathem to Vilsteren and from Zweekhorst to Lochem. To complete this task, we needed a bending machine. So, a couple of days later, Arie Hak got onto an airplane to Houston in the United States to have one made’, said Brouwer. ‘This order became the most powerful bending machine in Europe with a weight of 50 tons and an astronomic price tag of two million Guilders.’

A year later, in 1974, the moment finally came. The machine was delivered in the Port of Rotterdam and was later transported to the location in Ridderkerk. ‘The attention was overwhelming’, Brouwer remembers. ‘By then, many of my colleagues were already busy welding strings at the pipeline trajectory, but of course they were short on quite a few bends. So it became a very busy year for us, as we did not only bend for our own projects, but also for other companies, including VSH.’

‘To deliver all the bends, we worked seven days a week, from five in the morning until nine in the evening. In weekends, Mister and Misses Hak came by who treated us to fish sandwiches, soup and a beer. It was a great season for both us and the firm. I enjoyed a wonderful’ career with many great colleagues and wouldn’t want to have missed it for anything in the world. The A.Hak yellow/green and A.Hak red/orange will forever be a part of me!’

NAME
Gerrie Robbe

POSITION
Director
A.Hak Leidingbouw

‘A travelling circus’

‘The best comparison to our club is probably a travelling circus. Our people and equipment move from project to project and meet different challenges everywhere’, states 55 year old Gerrie Robbe, the longstanding Director of A.Hak Leidingbouw.

‘The pipeline industry has always been a world where those willing to do hard labour and work overtime could earn a lot of money. Especially in the sixties and seventies, an enormous amount of projects were completed to create the infrastructure required by clients such as Gasunie. It was not uncommon for our staff to move along with the pipeline circus, while temporarily living in trailers with their family. Together with their earthly possessions, they went along from one project to another. Nowadays, these long hours have become more of an exception, but hard work in all kinds of weather, that never changed’, Robbe reflects on the early years of the company.

NO NINE TO FIVE JOB

‘Our job really takes us to every corner of the country or even the world. As the commutes would be incredibly long, most of our people leave their homes on Monday morning, sometimes even on Sunday evening, after which they spend the rest of the week with guest families. Working at A.Hak Leidingbouw certainly isn’t a nine to five job. That is one of the first things we tell new staff applying for a job: one’s professional and private life will often intertwine, and one has to be willing and able to deal with that. The risk of becoming addicted to the world of pipelines is rather big according to Robbe. ‘I think you should look at the pipeline industry like this: you’ll either pack your stuff and leave within three months, or the addiction gets to you and before you know it, thirty years have passed.’

EVERLASTING FIGHT

Those sticking with the company, do get a lot in return. ‘Especially in the Dutch river delta, we fight an everlasting battle against continuously changing soil conditions and the omnipresent ground water. This means that we always have to find new solutions for new obstacles in every assignment. No project is ever the same.’
‘Based on our knowledge, the perseverance and commitment of our staff and our state of the art pipeline machinery, we do a very decent job at getting all pipelines into the ground, and that is very rewarding. Never did we leave a pipeline lying around that wasn’t supposed to be there.’

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

As a result of A.Hak’s international focus, Robbe has seen a lot of the world. The most impressive assignment for him was a project in the mid-eighties in Iran, when the country was at war with Iraq. ‘Side booms, cranes, shovels, welding machines and lots of other machinery were loaded onto a floating container in the Port of Rotterdam. It was shipped to the Iranian coast through the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Channel, where the entire container was pulled onto the beach and unloaded. All in all we stayed there for half a year, did our jobs, packed our bags and marched on to the next job. If that isn’t a travelling circus!’

GROWING ACROSS BORDERS

The era of immense growth

Three French companies are dominating Dutch large pipeline construction projects in the early seventies: AIGB, Entrepose and Socea. Per Gasunie request, A.Hak takes part in a construction project of a 48” pipeline near the town of Wijchen.

This proves to be a prelude for an important shift in the industry. In 1973, Gasunie decides to terminate the cooperation with the French. The Dutch managers, currently employed by these French companies, are positioned at various Dutch companies as to retain their knowledge for the domestic market. One of those Dutch individuals is Willem van Geenhuizen. He starts his tenure with A.Hak on January 1st 1974.

INNOVATIONS

1974

THIS GROWTH COMES AT A PRICE.
A.HAK INVESTS 7.4 MILLION GUILDERS.

The year 1974 turns out to be one of enormous growth. A.Hak Pijpleidingen constructs 80 kilometres of 48” gas pipelines in Holland, from Ommen to Zweekhorst, and another 48” pipeline from Rolde to Ommen, a 24” to 36” oil and gas pipeline in Oostvoorne, the Uithuizen gas dehydration installation, 50 kilometres of 24” oil pipeline and modifications to Pier 9 at Botlek Paktank. Revenue doubles in this year, from 24 to 49 million Guilders, while net profit increases to 9%.

In the following year, A.Hak is out for its first international adventure, starting as a subcontractor in Turkey for the German firm Mannesmann. Again Gasunie contributes substantially in 1975, no less than 105 kilometres of 48” pipeline is constructed from Echt to Ravenstein, and 18” pipelines from Assenburg to Assendelft and from Muiden to Almere. A third regional branch office is opened in Aalsmeer, led by Mark de Haan. Again revenues are doubled with great contributions from the regional offices, they cross thresholds of 8 million Guilders (Born), 6 million Guilders (Aalsmeer) and 11 million Guilders (Hattem).

WILLEM VAN GEENHUIZEN

On February 3rd 1943, Willem van Geenhuizen is born as the son of a hairdresser. After obtaining his civil engineering degree he starts his career with Grontmij, where he is stationed abroad and spends years in Madagascar and Libya together with his wife.
When the Libyan king Idris is ousted by Colonel Gadhafi in 1969, Willem and Gerda leave all their possessions in Libya behind and immediately return to Holland. There, Willem becomes an associate director at AIGB, a construction consortium composed of IGB, Grontmij and the French company Spie Batignolles. This consortium built many kilometres of large gas transport pipelines for Gasunie throughout the late sixties and early seventies.
On January 1st 1974, Van Geenhuizen starts his tenure with A.Hak Pijpleidingen. His vast knowledge about large transport pipeline constructions and his international experience prove to be the source of an important contribution to the growth of the company. Within just a couple of years, A.Hak Pijpleidingen is transformed from a modest domestically operating Dutch party to a heavyweight international with a turnover of several hundred millions of euros.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1974

THE OIL PRICE INCREASES TO 37 GUILDERS PER BARREL FROM ONLY 11 GUILDERS PER BARREL IN 1971. THE LAST COAL MINE OWNED BY THE STATE, ORANJE NASSAU IN HEERLEN, IS CLOSED.

‘Boss’ Hak was always in for a prank, what goes around, comes around. Work completion on a submersed pipeline for Gasunie near Heerenveen was celebrated with champagne. Now everybody knows what happens when a bottle of champagne is shaken. Van Geenhuizen, third from the right, looks at Hak’s failed attempt to escape.

Construction of a submersed pipeline
for Gasunie near Heerenveen.

INTERVIEW
JAN ADDINK FIRST WORKSHOP FOREMAN

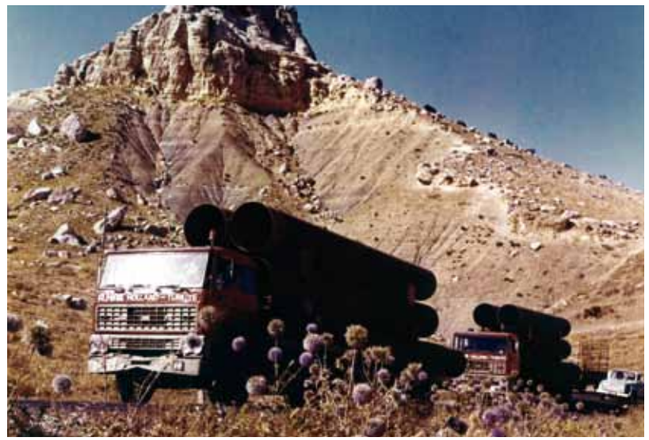
‘They called me Gyro Gearloose’

Several machines that are brain-children of the now 86 year old Jan Addink are still used on various projects until this very day. ‘They don’t call me A.Hak’s Gyro Gearloose without a reason’ says the feisty senior who remained active for the firm, even as a mailman, up to the age of 80.

‘After completing a technical education I started working at the Ridderkerk location in 1974, at the same time as Willem van Geenhuizen. As a foreman in the workshop I developed various technical solutions that are used up to this very day. One of them is a special unit for district heating projects that pulls pipes apart. After my son-in-law came back from an exposition in Munich, he told me he saw me there, but I surely had not been there. Turns out it was a giant poster showing a picture of me with the unit I developed.’
‘I also built a special vehicle in Saudi Arabia to transport pipes within a tunnel, as there was not enough space to use a crane. The vehicle had to be able to drive both forward and backward, this is why I added a steering wheel to both the front and the back side.’
‘I lived in Geldermalsen, but when I was hired, Van Geenhuizen asked me if I wanted to move to the central Ridderkerk location anytime soon, I didn’t feel like doing that, as the region we lived in felt like home to my wife and myself. “Well, let’s see about that again in a year”, Van Geenhuizen told me, but I didn’t change my mind and even received a Mercedes to commute. Not much time passed before the headquarters moved to Tricht, a township of my native Geldermalsen, so from then on I could almost walk to get to work.’
‘At the age of 62, I retired early, but I wasn’t just ready to take it easy and live out my days. That’s why I was involved with the company until my 80th birthday, delivering mail and getting travel documents to embassies for our boys abroad. After that, Van Geenhuizen told me I did my part and I settled down. I’m happy that I’m still healthy and my wife and I are enjoying life in our apartment in Geldermalsen.

The seventies: Foreign adventures

The Turkish deal was signed in Istanbul. Quite a change of scenery compared to Ridderkerk.



With Willem van Geenhuizen within the ranks, A.Hak Pijpleidingen takes its first international steps in 1975. And they are no small steps. The first foreign projects consists of shipping and stringing 800 kilometres of 40” pipelines for an oil pipeline from Kirkuk in Iraq, all the way to Iskenderun in Turkey, on the coast of the Mediterranean sea. The project is not led by A.Hak, this time, but by Mannesmann from Düsseldorf. 35 low loaders are purchased for this project, some of which were first put to work in Holland (ref: photos). The oil pipeline crosses the rivers Euphrates and Tigris and goes right through the land of the Kurds, who even then were fighting against oppression from the Turkish government. Arie de Bruyn was present on the site for fifteen months. He lived in Sealand containers where he defied extreme temperatures every time he went outside. It could easily be 35 degrees Celsius during the summer, while minus 35 degrees Celsius was no exception in Eastern Turkey during the winter.

In 1976 a cooling water pipeline is constructed for Reliant Doha with a huge two metre diameter for the Ras Abu Fantas project in Qatar. The men of A.Hak learned that Turkey was not so hot after all, when they first experienced extremely high temperatures, combined with an 85% humidity, in this desert country.

FERTILE DESERT

The desert however, proves to be a more than fertile area for A.Hak when a new assignment is awarded in 1977 in Saudi Arabia by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water. Together with partner Someco-Spac, drinking water facilities for the cities of Ta’if and Hada are constructed. The latter city also hosts the summer residence of the Royal family. The entire project consists of 240 kilometres of pipeline, varying between 10” and 24” diameters, 24 water springs, 6 pump stations and all corresponding reservoirs. It’s a very large

project worth over 195 million Guilders, in which A.Hak participates for 60% and does not only construct, but also supplies all materials and equipment. While the A.Hak companies now prefer to work with local staff, all projects back then – even those most far away – were mainly completed by Europeans. In this case: 75 Dutch and 75 French expats.

The trajectory of this water pipeline ran completely through the Asir mountain range and for 75% through rocky terrain which didn't allow for easy digging. When the two D9 bulldozers could not empty the slope, dynamite was used. Large obstacles were blown to pieces with explosions, after which trenches were created. The pipes were made by Vallourec and were internally cemented and interconnected with sleeves. The system had a 40 bar maximum operational pressure, while an air vent or drain that had to be flanged was installed every three hundred metres. All in all, it was quite a job to pressurise the system free of any leaks.

SPECIAL MEASURES

To accommodate the drinking water facilities, 24 water wells were sunk in two different 'wadis', river beds in the desert that remain dry for the largest part of the year, but are capable of handling large amounts of water during wet periods or downpours. The wells are sunk to depths of 40 metres, and during the few times it rains, water flows violently through the wadis. Because of that violent aspect, a protective construction is designed that guides the water to the banks via steel bridges. The substantial temperature fluctuations in the desert climate also require special measures, e.g. when pouring concrete. With cloths that are continuously kept moist, the men reduce the risks of contraction cracks in the concrete.

‘Off to Turkey with my wife, kid and furniture’

The original plan for Xaf Hendriksen of A.Hak Pijpleidingen was to only spend a week in Turkey in May 1975. In the end, he didn’t return home until Christmas….The adventures of our first expats.

‘Back in May 1975 I went on a business trip to Turkey with ‘boss’ Hak and Willem van Geenhuizen. As a subcontractor of the German firm Mannesmann, we were to prepare the transport and strings of a 40” oil pipeline with a length of 800 kilometres between Kirkuk and Ceyhan’, so tells the 66 year old Xaf Hendriksen. ‘But when we arrived, Mannesmann told us that the pipes for the oil pipeline would be delivered quickly. “So I guess you’re staying here”, Arie Hak told me. “But what about my wife and my daughter? And where should I stay?” I asked. “Don’t worry, here’s 10,000 Guilders, that should take care of you for a while. I’ll get back to Holland and makes sure that your wife, kid and furniture are sent over here.” In the end, I didn’t get back home until Christmas that year.’

WHAT AN EXPERIENCE

‘I had never flown in my life and didn’t even went abroad’, so complements his 64 years old wife Mimi. ‘So it was quite the experience when I and our one year old daughter followed boss Hak, Willem van Geenhuizen and Xaf to Turkey in July ’75. We moved into a spacious home in Iskenderun at the Mediterranean Sea. But because the ship with our furniture was delayed, we couldn’t furnish the house yet. So we slept on two steel beds we pulled together, while our daughter slept between us.’

A LOT OF GUESTS

‘We always had a lot of guests in our house’, tells Xaf. ‘Hak had purchased 35 DAF trucks and Floor trailers for the project, so the mechanics and drivers regularly had dinner at our place. Of course these lads were used to traditional Dutch cooking, so after some time they really couldn’t see any more tomatoes, onions and eggplants.’
But Hak found a solution for that. Xaf: ‘In the Ridderkerk location in Holland we manufactured our own gas oil tanks which were as wide as a truck. Boss Hak called me and told me that one would arrive that wasn’t entirely welded shut on the top side. “Just open it carefully and check what’s inside.” To our big surprise, it contained hundreds of cans of vegetables, jerry cans with gin and French cognac and cases of cigars. We could drink, eat and smoke from that stash well into 1977!’

ACTIVE

These first A.Hak expats lived through a lot of different adventures together, stories that still make them laugh when even thinking about them. ‘So the brother-in-law of Piet Hak, Leo de Lijster, was taking a shower, while mechanic Lex Doff was on the toilet, Xaf tells with a smirk. ‘All of a sudden, the boiler exploded and they both jumped out naked while totally panicking!’
Xaf, who transferred his role as Director of A.Hak International to Peter van der Spoel two years ago, is still active for the group of companies. ‘I just returned from Mongolia for a charity project.’
Mimi also still feels highly involved with the wellbeing of the company. ‘I was always happy to help in my own way. And in the eighties and nineties I hosted various exhibitions with Gerda van Geenhuizen, both in Holland as in several other countries.’

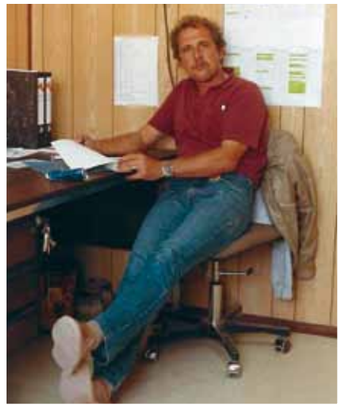
The first ship is already loaded at the Paktank pier, soon after A.Hak had entirely renovated it.

Of course work also continues back home in the Netherlands. In 1976 work proceeds on a compressor station in Ravenstein and the gas transport pipeline Ommen-Esveld, a 48” pipeline stretching 36 kilometres in length, both for Gasunie. For the same client a 42” pipeline measuring 80 kilometres in length is constructed in the next year, between the towns of Mill and Pey. Water pipelines also remain a popular product in the domestic market. In the same year a double pipeline with an 1,100 mm diameter is constructed between Lage Zwaluwe and Rode Vaart.

1978 is also the year in which the engineering firm Gastechniek is acquired and a new activity is added to the A.Hak portfolio: gas leak surveying, also called leak detection. In the Egyptian Alexandria, two of these assignments are carried out. Together with Comprimo, A.Hak Pijpleidingen constructs a ballast and fire extinguishing water pipeline.

INTERVIEW
HERMAN LITTEL ONE OF THE FIRST EXPATS

‘Hot enough to bake eggs on the pipeline’



‘The inside of the two metre diameter pipeline was so hot that, within fifteen minutes after we started welding, sweat would run down our welding lenses and our welding jackets could be wrung out. The outside was so hot, that you could easily bake an egg on it’, tells Herman Littel, one of the first A.Hak men to be sent to Doha in Qatar in the seventies.

‘As a welder, I worked on the pipelines of a large desalination factory in Doha in Qatar, where salt water is converted to fresh water. All in all, I spent more than a year there. Temperatures of 50 degrees Celsius and a humidity of more than 80 percent were no exception in the summer. Being used to a much colder climate, this was something that we as Dutch boys had to get used to. To ease the burden in the summer, we worked from six to eleven in the morning and from four in the afternoon to eight in the evening. At first we stayed in a hotel, but then quickly moved to a spacious villa. Our team even had its own chef to ensure our stomachs were filled.’

‘It was so hot and humid in Qatar that we placed a fan at the entry of the pipe, but even then it was so hot that we were all sweating within minutes and had to leave the pipe after half an hour of welding. If we had to enter the 40 foot container to get machinery, we first took a deep breath before getting in there.’

‘Our great sense of community and solidarity easily made up for these hard labour conditions. Sunday was our day off and we used that for excursions. One day, we went to a salt lake in the desert to have a view at the colourful flamingos living there. And of course, as headstrong Dutchies we thought we could just drive down there. Well, the fact that we got completely lost taught us otherwise. We also realised that we didn’t bring enough water with us, so when we finally found the right way back later that day, the world was lifted of our shoulders.’

Together with expats from other companies who stayed there, we started a local bowling competition. Eventually we even won the championship and it was broadcasted on an English channel of Doha Qatar. Since then, I have retired, but just thinking about those great projects I’ve worked on for the firm, puts a smile on my face.’

Construction of a combined submersed pipeline, carried out by the Hattem location.

Olympic flame

Much closer to home than Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia lays a country that still has an exotic name to it, as it no longer exists in its former capacity: Yugoslavia. In 1979, Sarajevo Gas hires A.Hak Pijpleidingen for the construction of 116 kilometres of gas pipeline with a 16” diameter, including three block valve stations. Obstacles on the route consist of three crossings of the river Bosna and a number of very steep slopes. The French Sofregaz was the consulting engineering firm for the client.

The trajectory ran from the town of Zvornik to Sarajevo, as the project was meant to transport Russian natural gas to Sarajevo. The main purpose of this construction was accommodating the 1984 Winter Olympic Games. Back then, a lot of the heating was done with wood and coals, leading to large ‘blankets’ of smog that would remain above the city; especially when there was no wind, as the city lies in a valley. Those are no circumstances to receive large numbers of athletes and – more important – the combined world press.

HARSH WINTERS

Other than clearing the rocky parts of the trajectory with explosives, the majority of work on this project was done by A.Hak itself. Tasks included creating the track profiles and block valve stations, applying and bending the pipeline segments, welding tasks and coating the welds. Much equipment was to be imported from the Netherlands, such as excavators, side booms, bending machines, pipe trailers, low loaders and soil transportation equipment; transports that met quite a few difficulties on the way. The winters in (then the Socialist Republic of) Bosnia and Herzegovina are very harsh and can be extremely snowy. The trajectory could be inaccessible for weeks at a time and driving with snow chains for weeks was no exception.

In order to transport all staff locally, A.Hak purchased 40 Russian made UAZ Jeeps. As spare parts were not available, the number of Jeeps decreased over time. Whenever a Jeep broke down, it could only be repaired by cannibalising parts from another vehicle. Spare parts for the equipment that was flown in from Holland were smuggled into the country via Austria, as a large supply was brought along that still proved not to be sufficient. Further down the route, A.Hak employed twenty Austrian staff members, mostly machine operators. They certainly knew where to find specific spare parts for Caterpillar and Liebherr machines.

BUT STILL NO MEDALS...

The team primarily consisted of A.Hak’s own staff and locally hired support personnel. All Dutch staff was accommodated in hotels and moved along the trajectory as work progressed. The local headquarters was located in the town Semizovac, near Sarajevo. The warehouse was also located near Sarajevo, but was later moved towards the end of the pipeline. A secondary office was located in Olovo, roughly halfway the trajectory.

Hydrostatic testing of the pipeline proved to be complicated due to the large height differences along the trajectory. The river crossings were of course separately tested. All in all, testing was completed successfully, so the pipeline was delivered fully operational without any leaks in 1980, well ahead of the 1984 Winter Olympic Games. At least it wasn’t A.Hak’s fault that the Netherlands returned from the Sarajevo Olympics without winning a single medal.

While work in Yugoslavia was still well underway, the firm in the Netherlands was utterly shocked by the sudden and unexpected passing of 'old man' Hak on October 1st 1979. He only lived to become 56 years of age. Although this event certainly meant the end of an era for A.Hak Pijpleidingen, the passing of its namesake did not mean the end of the company. Led by Misses Hak, who was supported by her sons and Willem van Geenhuizen, the work continued. Roelof Deen was hired as the company's new chief calculator.

Arie Hak, 1923 – 1979.

WORLD HISTORY

1979

THE SHAH OF IRAN FLEES AND AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI BECOMES THE NEW LEADER. IN IRAQ, SADDAM HUSSEIN IS PROCLAIMED TO BE THE PRESIDENT AND SUPREME COMMANDER.

‘We want to be an industry leader in Western Europe as well’

NAME
Peter van der Spoel

POSITION
Director at
A.Hak International

‘In the coming years we want to further expand our activities in Africa and South America. But Europe has some very interesting projects to look forward to as well’, the 46 year old Director Peter van der Spoel of A.Hak International tells.

Having graduated in road and waterway engineering at technical college, he first met A.Hak at an early age during summer jobs and an internship. ‘After that I travelled around a lot in Belgium and the Netherlands where I stayed at guest families. One of the first international projects was the Interconnector pipeline construction between Zeebrugge and Germany’, according to Van der Spoel.

‘We have been active in Saudi Arabia for a very long time, constructing water pipelines and much more.’ Van der Spoel clarifies the international ambitions of the company. ‘We now also find ourselves in the process of somewhat shifting our focus to the Oil & Gas industry as billions of euros will be invested in downstream activities in the coming years. We have gained a solid position in Iraq, while Africa and South America will become increasingly more important in the coming years.’

SOUTH STREAM PIPELINE

He emphasises that A.Hak International also wants to be an industry leader in Western Europe. ‘Our new office in Toulouse provides the opportunity to optimally serve the French market. Large investments will take place in the pipeline network of mayor parties such as GRT GAZ and TIGF in the coming years. Recently we already completed a project for TIFG and next year we will, cooperating with French company Spiecapag, construct over 300 kilometres of 48” pipeline.’

The company also follows the developments around the South Stream pipeline with great interest. Russian gas will flow through these pipelines, via the Balkan, to other European countries. ‘We hope to be selected to construct a segment of this pipeline’, said Van der Spoel. He also sees opportunities in the United Kingdom where the number of compressor stations and pipelines are being expanded.

PERSEVERANCE THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

Shoulders to the wheel

After the sudden passing of its founder and namesake, the firm faced the challenge of rediscovering itself in the early eighties of the past century. Standing and working together as one proved to be critical for the survival of the firm in the economic crisis of this decade.

The passing of Arie Hak happened utterly unexpected. His widow, Misses D.A. Hak – de Bruyn, suddenly had to take matters into her own hands for both A.Hak Pijpleidingen, the firm around which this book revolves, and the transport and rental activities. In April 1980, the first company magazine appears, and it includes a preamble written by Misses Hak. She asks her staff to stand as one in these tough times. It is 'more than ever before of the greatest importance that we, together as one, with great solidarity, with loyalty and zeal and as a family, are involved with the firm, in the solemn awareness that it is the firm from which we all earn our livings.' The magazine, named the 'Hakblad', is designed to appeal to everybody in the firm, including the staff's wives and children, and thus everybody is invited, indeed with some vigour, to cooperate in the creation of its content. Misses Hak did not only want to create a flourishing company magazine, but also wanted it to act as a binding element. She writes: 'That this magazine shall contribute to the maintenance of our good relations is my most sincere desire'. The editors also inform the readers of this first edition that they should not get used to the name 'Hakblad'. 'As all of you shall notice, this magazine is yet to be officially named, as we want to provide you with the opportunity to name this presence within the company.' Various potential names are submitted, including names as 'The Hak Express', 'The Outlook' (the email application was yet to be developed) and various other names, causing the editorial board to delay its decision for three editions. In the first publication in the second year, it is decided to maintain the name Hakblad, as everybody got quite used to it after all.

ENVIRONMENT

1980

THE WADDEN SEA REGION IS DECLARED A PROTECTED NATURE RESERVE. A DECADE LONG VOLUNTARY MORATORIUM COMMENCES.

INTERVIEW

JAN TEEKENS ALL-ROUND CALCULATOR

'I experience something new every day'

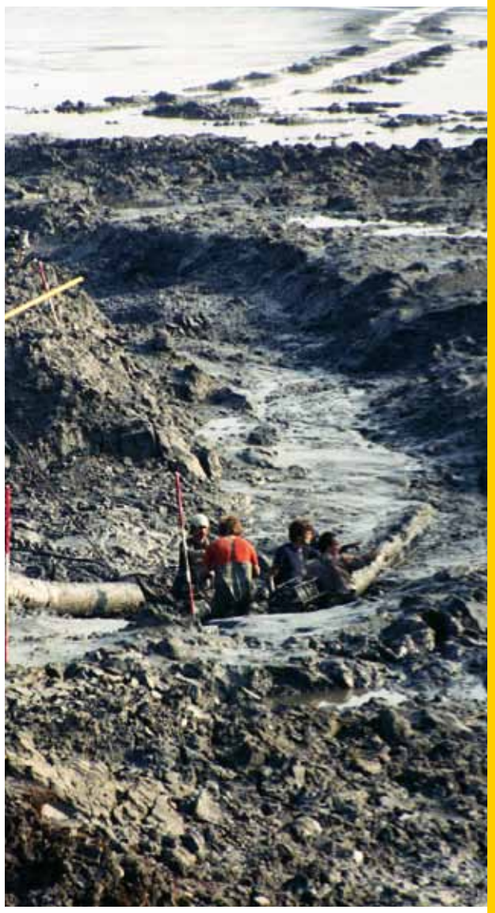
'I recall the sense of liberation I felt when I started working with A.Hak in the early eighties. I quickly realised that I could come up with countless creations, as the company was able to manufacture pretty much anything', says the chief calculator Jan Teekens while reflecting on the early years of his career.

'Calculating the price quote for a project happens in quite an original way with me. I imagine what needs to be done based on the designs, by visiting the locations, reading the project framework and other parameters, after which I write it all down. It could be compared to playing a video inside my head. This can be especially challenging for projects in which we have to go deeper into the ground. As you go deeper, risks increase while predictability decreases. Factors to take into account are the soil composition, ground water levels and the environment, but also the behaviour of people under all kinds of circumstances. There is so much to take into account when calculating the contract price and getting it 100% right is simply impossible. And that is exactly what makes my job so rewarding, even though I spent most of my days inside an office.'

'Some people will surely ask themselves what could be so exciting about staring at a screen all day. But if you have a rather vivid imagination, you'll discover new secrets every day. I'm pretty much still the kid playing with his toy truck and bulldozer in kindergarten. Another fascinating aspect of my work is cooperating with various other fields of expertise, such as dredging companies and offshore (salvage) companies.'

'The atmosphere and opportunities found at A.Hak are pretty rare. Once you deliver results, things move quickly, you'll get more responsibility and can fully develop yourself.'

Gas for the isle of Ameland



“Historic Decision: Natural gas for the Frisian isle of Ameland”, so reads the rough translation of a newspaper headline in the ‘Friesch Dagblad’, when the North-Frisian Gas Company announced that this Frisian Island would be connected to the natural gas infrastructure as of October 1st 1980. It was a historic event indeed, as the plans – as were the protests – that were fought over all the way up to the Crown, dated back to as early as 1972.

Now that the decision was definitive, attention shifted towards the vast amount of work involved with this project. A.Hak was granted projects from various companies. The ‘Wadleiding’, a 27 kilometre long 8” pipeline from mainland Hallum to the receiving station in the island town Nes was created for Gasunie Groningen. The receiving station itself, including its schematics and connecting it to the accompanying pipelines, was built for Gasunie Deventer. The construction of 60 kilometres of natural gas pipelines and connecting 2,000 homes was carried out for the North Frisian Gas Company. The parallel construction of a CAI cable network completed the project.

THE GREAT FLOOD AND TIDES

The 8” steel pipeline actually consisted of three separate projects, each of them facing their own individual challenges. The Frisian segment, measuring 14 kilometres, contained a large number of submerged pipelines and road drillings and was constructed during a true Great Flood: for forty days straight, it rained on the thick Frisian clay soil. For the segment running through the Wadden Sea, a special dike was constructed, so that work could continue during high water. Strings of 350 metres each were welded here, and photographed, cleaned and insulated. Once completed on this terrain, these pipeline segments were laid onto a conveyor system and then pulled towards the sea. By repeating this process, 1,050 metres strings were created that were pulled onto a pontoon with a winch during high water, after which the pontoon headed out into the sea towards the isle of Ameland. Repeating these steps again and again until the shores were reached. The direction was marked with long wooden poles and a buoy marked the beginning and end of a string.

When sufficient strings were placed on the sandbanks, the connections were to be created. In ‘the Saloon’, created at the centre of the mudflat and not one where alcoholic beverages were served, staff waited until low tide occurred, after which the excavators were instantly driven of the barges while welding equipment and other devices were brought along for the ride. Digging the trenches, laying the pipes and then filling the trenches again, were true races against the water. The men lived by the tides, as the water needed to be low enough to be able to work and high enough to move the small tugboat from and to the Saloon. For the men’s safety, they were only allowed to work during daylight and all work was stopped when a storm came up. Digging was virtually impossible in the gullies and marshes, so trenches were created by a suction dredger, after which a sounding boat checked whether the depth was accurate. The trench was later filled again.

ON THE ISLAND

The third part of the gas pipeline was located on the isle of Ameland. Every pipeline segment, as well as every single replacement bolt for welding machines, was to be sent to the island with a ferry. The parallel creation of the CAI networkl also proved not to be a walk in the park, as of course nobody was home when the large amount of holiday homes on the island were to be connected. Good luck finding any local personnel that could help during the holiday season.

After the first oil crisis of 1973, oil prices again rose sharply in 1979 and 1980. One of its results was the serious reconsideration of a concept called ‘district heating’. Large district heating projects, with systems connected to waste incinerators, were used abroad, but not yet in Holland. A.Hak however, did take part in smaller comparable projects in which specific neighbourhoods were heated in the same way, including one in the city of Meppel were a renovation project was completed in 1980. Approximately 3,000 metres of pipe-in-pipe is constructed here; an inside tube made from steel and insulated with rigid foam material, with a second hard-plastic pipe surrounding it.
In 1980 a project is carried out for Rijkswaterstaat, the Dutch governmental agency responsible for water and road management. A new culvert is constructed below the Wessem-Nederweert channel. It consists of three interconnected submersed pipelines made of steel that were assembled, welded and coated at the Port of Rotterdam construction facility, after which it was transported all the way to Limburg as one complete system to be sunk and installed into the channel. During the construction of another submersed pipeline, later that year in the city of Zwolle, a high voltage power cable is to be pulled into the jacket tube. The tractive force used for that operation is not to exceed 1,000 kilograms. A.Hak’s experienced staff knows they can complete this well within this margin, but the client needs solid proof before approving the method. That’s why Rob Vermeulen starts experimenting with pieces of cable jacket tubes, soap and eventually even allantoin to find empirical proof. The actual tractive force even remains below 400 kilograms.

The high oil prices in the Middle East are the cause for an accelerated production pace of the domestic oil and gas reserves in the Schoonebeek area. A.Hak Pijpleidingen benefits from these developments by carrying out various projects for the NAM, including the replacement of several pipelines corroded by the aggressive salts in the crude oil. In the same period, A.Hak starts working on the first construction projects for steam injection pipes. By injecting steam into the oil fields, the pressure, and thus the production speed, was increased.

WORLD HISTORY
SEPTEMBER 21ST
1980

START OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR BETWEEN THE IRAQ OF SADDAM HUSSEIN AND THE IRAN OF AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI.

A new culvert for Rijkswaterstaat departs from the Waalhaven to be shipped to Limburg as one complete installation.

A.Hak scored yet another project in the desert, this time in Tunisia.

Although the high oil price was of course (and remains today) a nuisance for its buyers, it certainly did no harm to the sellers. The Arab countries received increased revenues, some of which was spent on infrastructure projects, and A.Hak was granted yet another drinking water project in the Saudi Rub' al Khali desert. The records about this project reveal that Saudi Arabia wasn't planning on working with a foreign workforce forever. The A.Hak board thinks two steps ahead and writes in the Hakblad: 'the amount of European labourers is to be kept to an absolute minimum. They are to be true specialists in their field of expertise (from crane operators to project managers) who are willing to transfer their knowledge to the locals.' This method grew out to become the standard approach for A.Hak until this very day.

WORLD HISTORY

1981

BOTH U.S. PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN AND POPE JOHN PAUL II SURVIVE THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS ON THEIR LIVES.

In 1981, in a landscape dominated by enormous super tankers, a deballast pipeline is constructed in the Botlek area. A.Hak Pijpleidingen Born completes a pipeline installation for the DSM Geleen factory. In the Frisian capital Leeuwarden, work is performed on a district heating project, a phenomenon of which A.Hak has come to expect a lot. Various municipalities are considering this energy consumption reducing form of heating at that time. Before a lot of these municipalities were aggregated into larger areas, over a 1,000 individual municipalities existed in the Netherlands. At the same time, A.Hak is working to internationalise its business. The company takes a 50% stake in a new construction company in Denmark which is to construct regional gas, oil and water pipelines, as well as carry out soil and welding tasks for district heating projects. The June 1981 edition of the Hakblad magazine describes a hopeful forecast of work that is to come. A large foreign project can be already be announced in September, this time in Tunisia. Here, a project is won for the construction of 300 kilometres of pipeline, varying in diameter between 4" and 20", which is to be carried out in 1982. A.Hak also returns to Saudi Arabia, this time for an irrigation pipeline from the Riyadh Treatment Plant to the agricultural areas in the Dirab valley.

INTERVIEW
MAGDA VAN VELDHOVEN MANAGEMENT SECRETARY

‘It still feels like coming home’

‘I started working at the firm in 1980 as a management secretary for Willem van Geenhuizen and witnessed how A.Hak grew from the wooden trailers in Ridderkerk to the large international organisation it is today. Despite of all those changes, working here still feels like coming home’, tells Magda van Veldhoven.

‘One reason I was able to work here for such a long time, was that I was lucky that my sister Petra Rieborn was able to take over my job when I became pregnant. Back then it was quite common to stop working once you had your first child. When Petra became pregnant six years later, I was able to get back to my old job and after that, we worked together in another job role in the form of a shared job.’
‘Together we watched the company grow to the international leader it has become today. That growth and various job roles we had as a result of that, always ensured we experienced new and exciting challenges. A couple of years ago, we returned to the management office in Tricht where we now work for Marco and Mariska van Geenhuizen, but are also being kept busy by “senior” every once in a while.’
‘The definition of our work as secretaries did change enormously over the years. We used to make copies on sheets of carbon paper, which we used to punch through on our typewriters. We always tried to keep typos to a minimum, as all corrections were visible on the paper.
An electric typewriter really was a novelty at the time, but can hardly be compared to the means of communication we have available today to talk to our domestic and international partners. Although a lot of things changed over the course of the years, one thing always remained the same: Working at A.Hak still feels like coming home. I think that’s a huge compliment for the large organisation we are today.’

Hot water transport pipeline Breda-Oosterhout.

The cooperation with the Danes also proves to be a productive one. A Danish design is used to construct a unique hot water pipeline between Breda and Geertuidenberg. Pre-tensioned steel-in-steel is an absolute novelty in the Netherlands. The city of Bergen op Zoom also gets its own district heating system based on this Danish design. Of course expertise is shared both ways, in Denmark a natural gas pipeline is constructed, including two river crossings and nine valve stations.

In the summer of 1981, A.Hak completes the expansion of a gas treatment station in Den Helder for the NAM. These projects also show another subtle change. Previous experience with comparable projects was gained by A.Hak as a subcontractor, while the firm now moves up to become the main contractor. The full responsibility of renovating the NAM gas dehydration installation in Rossum Weerslo is awarded to A.Hak that year, while the pipelines of the ‘Wassenaarse veld’ are entirely replaced the following year.
1981 proves to be another year of important changes, as Misses Hak now gets support on the Board. Piet Hak (transport division) and Willem van Geenhuizen (pipeline division) are appointed as directors, while Xaf Hendriksen also takes a seat in the Board as deputy director under Willem van Geenhuizen.

1982 is the year in which A.Hak is, for the first time, present as an exhibitor at the World Gas Conference in Lausanne, France, then being held for the fifteenth time. As Willem Van Geenhuizen and Xaf Hendriksen cannot find the time to attend, they delegate their spouses. This proves to be a very modern step in this era, as Gerda and Mimi turn out to be the only women representing a firm, a reason by itself for gaining a lot of attention. They try to answer all questions from stand visitors as well as they can, based on knowledge gained from flyers and an interview session with the board. It all goes quite well in English, Dutch, German and French, although explaining details to a Russian delegation, highly interested in a model of the steel-in-steel system, proves to be just a bit more complicated. Any knowledge gaps were quickly filled in the same evening by calling home.

INNOVATIONS

1982

BEGINNING OF THE PC ERA (ALTHOUGH NOT QUITE YET AT A.HAK).

From an economic point of view, the early eighties are very worrying. News reports speak about an official crisis and unemployment rates are increasing at an alarming rate. A.Hak Pijpleidingen however, starts the new year of 1983 optimistically, albeit somewhat careful. A large order from Saudi Arabia is the primary reason for this optimism. It's a project that does not remain unnoticed, as three major Dutch newspapers write about it. The Financial Times of September 17th 1982 even posted a headline reading 'Dutch Group wins share in Saudi water contract'. The Dutch newspapers mention that the project is worth 250 million Guilders. This equals more than one million Guilders per kilometre, as the project consists of the construction of 250 kilometres of water pipeline from the Red Sea to Mecca. To win this assignment, a syndicate is formed with the Saudi construction company Al-Rashid, between 60 and 100 Dutch employees will travel to Saudi Arabia.
Back home in the domestic market, the earlier completed hot water pipeline from Geertruidenberg to Breda is extended to Tilburg. So in addition to the spectacular projects won far from home, A.Hak might be even happier with the loyal clients it has gathered in the Dutch market.
The Provincial Northern Brabant Electricity Company, for whom these hot water pipelines were constructed, is one of those clients, in addition to the NAM and Paktank Botlek.
For the latter client a pump station is converted, that is to remain fully operational while the work is carried out. Solid client relations and an excellent cooperation with their operational departments are of critical importance in these assignments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1983

THE UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBER IN THE NETHERLANDS INCREASES TO ALMOST 600,000, OVER 10% OF THE WORKING POPULATION CANNOT FIND A JOB.

An important name returns regularly, both in the records as of course on the balance sheets. Gasunie orders a partial pipeline here, a compressor station there, or a valve station on yet another location. Throughout A.Hak's existence, it's such a regular that its name may sometimes even be forgotten in this story, which is of course inevitably incomplete by itself. In 1984 however, this name may certainly not be forgotten, as Gasunie signs a contract for a very special project: the construction of a landing, a pipeline that arrived on land at Callantsoog from the offshore K15 oil rig.

WORLD NEWS

1984

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE DIE IN INDIA AS A RESULT OF THE BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY, WHERE POISON GAS LEAKED FROM THE UNION CARBIDE FACTORY.

This assignment included a land and a sea trajectory in which the dunes were to be crossed as well. On the land trajectory, that had a two kilometre length, strings with a total length of four kilometres were prepared to defy the sea. After being ballasted with concrete mortar, the pipes weighed approximately eleven tons per piece. One of the largest cutter-suction dredgers, deployed by the firm Zanen Verstoep, needs three weeks to dredge the trench at the bottom of the sea. At the same time, a large dune is to be partially excavated ashore.

Callantsoog landing.

The land trajectory.

Another project that speaks even more to the imagination is the construction of the gas pipeline crossing the Buiten-IJ lake near Amsterdam. Together with Texan company Berco, A.Hak carries out the first HDD project in Western Europe, measuring no less than 620 metres. This project led to a lot of publicity for both client Gasunie and A.Hak and was even shown on the national news, as well as in national newspapers. 'Underground drilling channel second egg of Columbus?' so read a mesmerised newspaper headline. Another newspaper was sure about what happened here and wrote 'Clean example of technical ingenuity'. The project also made Gasunie as proud as a peacock, as is witnessed by an enormous advertisement in various newspapers with the header: 'Those on the other shore of the IJ lake were surprised', to continue explaining how a chisel drill was pulled into a small pipe behind it, after which the gas pipeline was pulled through that little 'tunnel'. The contractors in this projects were awarded a big compliment: 'The technicians hit two birds with one stone: shipping traffic and houseboats did not experience any inconvenience and time and money were saved by this approach. Using this new method, nuisance for both people and the environment are reduced to an absolute minimum.'

SPORTS

1984

THE WINTER OLYMPICS TAKE PLACE IN SARAJEVO, YUGOSLAVIA.

The first horizontally directed drilling in Western Europe is completed by A.Hak in cooperation with the Texan firm Berco. Here, the Buiten-IJ lake is crossed for Gasunie, with a length of 620 metres.

ON OUR OWN

The era of expansion

In 1985 another new era looms over the horizon. After having existed as a dual company for a long time, one focusing on transport and equipment rentals and another named A.Hak Pijpleidingen, the company is formally divided. As the Van Geenhuizen family will now lead A.Hak Pijpleidingen, it will continue to be a family company.

The year 1984 ends with a letter, dated December 28th and addressed to the entire staff of A.Hak Pijpleidingen BV and A.Hak Transportbedrijf en werktuigenverhuur BV (Transport company and equipment rental). The letter announced that 1984 was a good year from a financial point of view and that the 1985 forecasts looked promising as well. This even resulted in the bank agreeing to provide financial room for further expansion of A.Hak Pijpleidingen BV. However, after more than twenty years, this will no longer happen under the supervision of the Hak family. In close consultation with its advisors, the family decided to commit itself to the transport and rental firm, led by Piet Hak as its director. A.Hak Pijpleidingen BV will, as from January 1st, be led by Willem van Geenhuizen. 'The ownership structures are therefore adjusted accordingly', so states the letter.

a.hak pijpleidingen b.v. | a.hak transportbedrijf en werktuigenverhuur bv

Direktie

Ridderkerk, 28 december 1984.

Geachte medewerker/ster,

Tot ons genoegen kunnen wij u mededelen dat het jaar 1984 een positieve ontwikkeling ten aanzien van onze financiële situatie heeft betekend, terwijl ook het jaar 1985 zich veelbelovend laat aanzien.

Op basis hiervan is onze bankier bereid gevonden het aansprakelijk vermogen te versterken, ten einde A. Hak Pijpleidingen B.V. in staat te stellen haar positie in de markt verder te ontwikkelen.

In nauw overleg met haar adviseurs heeft de familie Hak besloten haar aandacht volledig te concentreren op het transport en werktuigenverhuurbedrijf. De direktie van A. Hak Transportbedrijf en Werktuigenverhuur B.V. wordt namens de familie Hak per 1 januari 1985 gevoerd door de heer P.C. Hak, die van A. Hak Pijpleidingen B.V. door de heer W.D. van Geenhuizen. De eigendomsverhoudingen zijn dan ook dienovereenkomstig aangepast.

Tenslotte hechten wij er aan onze dankbaarheid te betuigen voor de vele opofferingen die de familie Hak zich heeft moeten getroosten, ten einde de bedrijven door de moeilijke achter ons liggende periode te loodsen.

Wij danken u allen voor de onverminderde inzet, die u in de afgelopen turbulente periode heeft getoond en hopen op een zelfde inzet voor de toekomst te mogen rekenen.

Rest ons nog u allen een goed 1985 toe te wensen en de hoop uit te spreken dat 1985 zowel voor u als voor ons aan de verwachtingen mag voldoen.

Met vriendelijke groet,

W.D. van Geenhuizen

P.C. Hak

A.Hak constructs various gas pipelines in Frisia. A special additional assignment is the construction and installation of a gas blending station in Kootstertille. This station is used to blend Frisian low calorific gas with the high calorific gas from Groningen, to create gas with the 'Slochteren' quality.

The ‘new’ company went on tirelessly. Although it is convenient to speak merely of A.Hak Pijpleidingen, the moment on which it became a group had already passed. With its headquarters based in Ridderkerk and departments in Dutch areas Limburg (Born), North-Holland (Aalsmeer), the eastern Netherlands (Hattem), the Gelderse Ingenieursbureau Gastechniek (Hattem) and various shares in international companies such as the Danish Jord-og Rørenteprise and its German subsidiary Bruun & Sörensen. And that’s not the end of it. A.Hak Pijpleidingen starts its own offshore adventure, using the expertise of Norwell Offshore Services based in Great Yarmouth, U.K., in which A.Hak held a share since 1979. The North-Holland department moves to a new accommodation in the town of Wormerveer. Also, the main depot and headquarters are moved from Ridderkerk to Tricht. This is also the reason why a new location for the Europoort/Botlek region is found in the town of Heerjansdam.

WORLD HISTORY

1985

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV RINGS IN A NEW ERA
BY COINING GLASNOST AND PERESTROIKA.

During the first years of this new situation, the hours were often so long that some people could not even go on their summer holidays. A new project emerges in 1985, working on the ‘Flexicoker’ project for Esso in the Botlek. This installation converts heavy oil fractions into lighter oil grades such as diesel. Other appealing projects are carried out for Gasunie, Shell and the NAM. Work is also started on the construction of a 2,700 metre steel-in-steel district heating pipeline, a project commissioned by the Municipal Works and the Energy department of the city of Rotterdam.

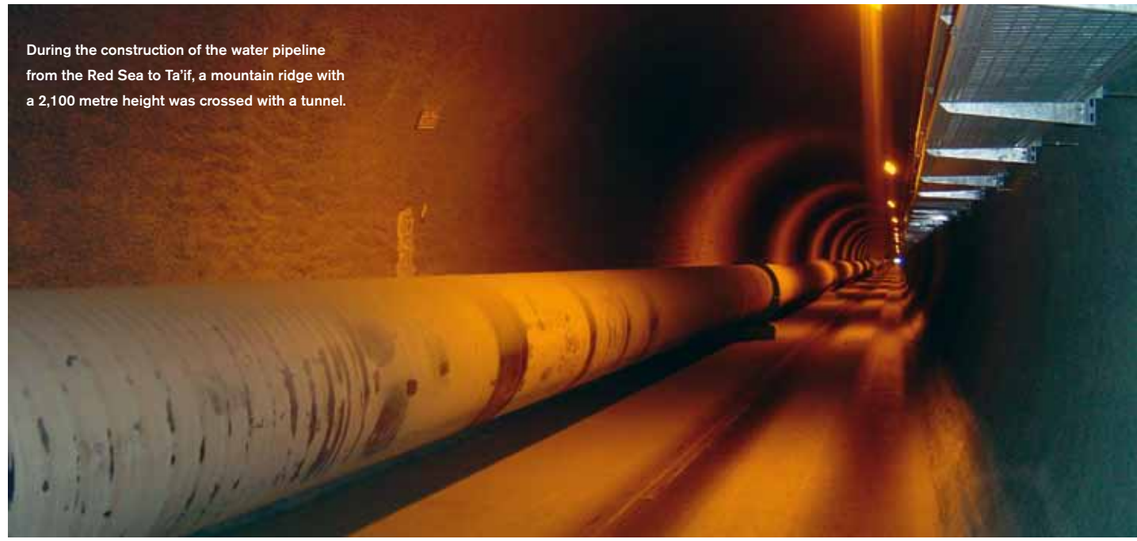
Flexicoker.

The Big Question Mark project.

Speaking of steel, there are a lot of different sorts of it. In this year, a four kilometre pipeline was constructed for the NAM to the isle of Ameland that was made of the very high steel grade duplex. The pipeline consisted of a mainland section of 1,400 metres and a naval section of 2,900 metres, a project known as ‘The Big Question Mark’. Not because it was doubted whether the Frisian island would be reached, this was already achieved in 1980, but more so because of the method used. The naval pipeline was preassembled on the beach and the strip in which the pipeline would normally be installed, ran right through a nature reserve. Because of this, a segment of the pipeline was created in a semicircle shape that avoided the nature reserve. When looking down from above, the shape of the pipeline looked like a question mark.

Throughout 1985 and 1986, A.Hak was involved in the construction of various offshore oil pipelines for the National Iranian Oil Company. A technically challenging project, in which a smooth cooperation with Dutch partners Smit Tak and Boskalis was established, but much more remembered by the A.Hak crew because of the war between Iraq and Iran that raged through the Middle East in that period. Iran was exporting oil from Kharg Island, which was heavily bombarded. To spare the island, offshore pipelines were to be constructed that could transport oil to floating transhipment equipment. Work proceeded efficiently, until a problem arose. The construction site was bombarded by Saddam Hussein's air force that suddenly appeared in the sky. A.Hak's staff, obviously in a state of fear, immediately returned to the Netherlands. A short time later, a small group of volunteers showed courage by returning to the site to complete their work. Three of the four pipelines were completed when an Iraqi warning was sent out, announcing that they would once again attack the construction site. The A.Hak staff left in a rush and the loading station, rebuilt by the Iranians after the first attack, was completely levelled. This also meant the instant end of A.Hak's activities in Iran.

Of course a lot happened outside of the offices as well. A.Hak Services was founded, a new company that primarily focused on testing and drying tasks. Far from the everyday jobs in the Netherlands, work gradually continued in Saudi Arabia on the water pipeline from the Red Sea to Ta'if. If one would image nothing but sand on this trajectory, well, think again, as a 2,100 metres mountain ridge is to be crossed. To complete this task, a tunnel with a 13 kilometre length and 4.5 metre diameter is drilled. After installing a floor and concrete pipeline supports, all pipes were driven into the tunnel with a self-unloading vehicle. A vehicle that was designed by the men of A.Hak themselves. With a Komatsu shovel, refitted as a side boom, the pipes were then locked in their definitive positions. The first pipe went into the tunnel in 1985, and by the end of March 1986, work was completed.



During the construction of the water pipeline from the Red Sea to Ta'if, a mountain ridge with a 2,100 metre height was crossed with a tunnel.

WORLD HISTORY
APRIL 26TH
1986
NUCLEAR DISASTER IN CHERNOBYL.

The Danish subsidiary Dansk Jord-og Rørenteprise (DJR), now a 100% daughter of A.Hak, started closing new orders both in the district heating segment, as in the gas pipeline construction industry. The German Bruun & Sörensen, automatically acquired upon the take-over of DJR, also achieved encouraging results with their new order portfolio.

In the meantime, the Dutch headquarters are introducing the first personal computers, accompanied by all kinds of new phrases such as bits and bytes, hardware and software. The IBM Personal Computer type TX that was purchased, has an astonishing internal memory of 128 kilobyte, which is expanded with a 10 megabyte external hard disk, while the floppy disks of those times offered 300 kilobytes of space. Although complex features such as text editing, working on data files and applications used for calculations were not available for everybody, these first PC's were heralding a new era. Of course not everybody recognised the progress it implied, but it was unquestionable that this movement towards the future was not to be reversed. There was much need to talk about this 'computerisation' and many discussions revolved around the choice to handle these tasks with own internal systems or to outsource them. 'After extensive IT research and getting expert opinions, the decision was made halfway through 1987 to process the administrative tasks of the financial and payroll administration on our own computer system', so reads the Hakblad magazine. The purchased computer now had a capacity of 571 MB in a network of over 50 terminals.

A.Hak did a great job in a 1986 project near Ommen, where a compressor station was modified and expanded for Gasunie.

INTERVIEW
ROBERT KROMMENHOEK ALL-ROUND BOOKKEEPER

'Gigantic machine with a colossal screen'

'In the early eighties I told Kees Korevaar, my former manager, that it could come in handy to start working with a PC. Well, that was out of the question. Until I got my hands on a PC in a warehouse at the Ridderkerk location and was able to show what could be done with it. A few weeks later I received an IBM XT with a price tag of 23,000 Guilders. Today, you wouldn't even want your worst enemy to have to work with that', bookkeeper Robert Krommenhoek explains about the introduction of the first IT equipment at A.Hak.

'It was this huge machine with a colossal black screen with green letters. Colour screens would not be introduced for another decade, but the IBM XT was a big leap forward. Before it was introduced, we used 14 column paper sheets to create our balance sheets. Manual work that cost a lot of time. Using the PC it all went a whole lot more quickly and errors were significantly reduced. It only took a couple of months before the next machine was ordered. The accountancy was then outsourced for some time, but was later insourced again.'
'Electronic banking proved to be too big of a leap a few years later. I remember visiting the former NMB bank, the current ING, to learn about the possibilities of electronic banking. "Don't do it, this is way too complex for A.Hak", was our reaction back then. Time certainly changed my mind on that. If I go an hour without bank mutations in our system today, I'm already on the phone to check if something's wrong with it.'

'In 1986, A.Hak moved from Ridderkerk to Tricht, as did our financial department. All procurement invoices are centrally processed by us and we created extensive reports on a weekly basis. Our slogan at the time was "We're done, let's go home.", which could be at ten in the evening or even at two in the morning, while we started at seven in the morning.'
'I'm 53 years old now, but up to this day I always want to be the first one to arrive at the office. Although the financial administration was delegated to the regional offices some years ago, our team still has a lot to do.'

Although A.Hak Pijpleidingen was indeed a separate and autonomous entity for quite some time, it really became clear when both the main depot and the headquarters were moved from Ridderkerk to Tricht.

The actual relocation from Ridderkerk to Tricht happened during the 1986 Christmas holidays. On May 29th and May 30th, when the dust had settled, a large open house was organised for both relations and the staff and their families.

To accommodate the festivities, the terrain was decorated with various party tents. Spread out over the terrain, guests of all ages enjoyed themselves in various carnival rides and live music played by orchestras and ensembles. The staff started the day with a hexathlon on the fields of the adjacent football squad. Both regions and countries played against one another. When, after those fierce battles, the new CFO of A.Hak, Koos van Winden, proved that it was the Hattem location that won rather than the Marum location, it was party time. A show by the famous Dutch artist Lee Towers is still mentioned as the highlight of these two days, but the pictures reveal that the other activities were equally successful.

The cornerstone of the new office building in Tricht is laid by Jan Algera. The photo on the right depicts the final result on the forefront.

Dutch celebrity Herman Emmink (photo below) was the host during the various presentations on the new terrain.

The Lee Towers show (photo on the right) was one of the highlights, while many also fanatically participated in a game of tug of war.

Festivities were concluded with fireworks, that ended with the text: 'And now let's get back to work'. And back to work they went. While the stock exchanges collapsed 'outside', the firm was at the dawn of a new period of expansion.

Festivities were concluded with fireworks, that ended with the text: 'And now let's get back to work'.

One of the driving forces behind the 1987 growth was the acquisition of Conline Holland, located in Bergen op Zoom and specialised in the production of pipes and fittings that were internally coated with cement. Conline cemented the tubes within its own factory or on-site. In the latter case, existing pipelines were cemented while they were already in position using a special technique. Various turn-key systems, made in the prefab workshop and 85% of which were exported, also originated in the factory. Its location in Bergen op Zoom also provided space for a new A.Hak location.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
OCTOBER 19TH
1987

STOCK MARKET COLLAPSE, 'BLACK FRIDAY'. FROM AUGUST 1982 UNTIL OCTOBER 1987, STOCK PRICES WENT UP WITH 350%. THIS MONDAY, THE STOCK EXCHANGE SUDDENLY DROPS WITH 12%, A FREEFALL THAT CONTINUES UP TO NOVEMBER 10TH, WHEN THE COUNTER STOPS AT -46%.

The conclusion that Conline was not a coincidental acquisition can be derived from the first projects it carried out as a new A.Hak company. The first project is the internal cleaning and cementing of a 3,200 metre underground pipeline for the 'dienst Drinkwaterleiding' (DWL, Drinking Water Services) in Rotterdam. A.Hak had already worked for this drinking water company, as well as others, for a long time and constructed, maintained and renovated their pipeline systems. With Conline now part of the group, these clients could be unburdened even more. It also resulted in work for A.Hak's location in Heerjansdam, where local staff ensured that the pipeline was made accessible and then cleaned. Because A.Hak had added this additional expertise to its portfolio, it became harder for clients not to notice the firm. This effect was also visible on an international scale: a new project was quickly awarded by a Norwegian refinery, where pipelines were to be prefabricated, coated externally and cemented internally, while other pipelines used for cooling and firewater with diameters up to 88" were cemented on-site. Conline temporarily hosted one of the Norwegian staff members in its office, who managed the project, while the men of A.Hak in Bergen op Zoom were busy with the prefab welding work.

In the meantime, A.Hak also arrived in Sweden for the testing and calibration of a 110 kilometre gas transport pipeline, which contained a small segment that was dried up to the 25 degrees Celsius dew point. The project was carried out under time pressure, as the pipelines were to be ready on December 1st 1987 and the men of A.Hak Services really wanted to be done before it would start freezing 25 degrees outside. This turned out to be quite difficult, as the assignment kept expanding throughout its duration. In the Botlek area, projects also kept coming in. Paktank was a regular client, Akzo Nobel was serviced and while Esso invented the Flexicoker, Shell developed its Hycon. These methods differed in their inner workings, but the objective remained the same: to have the refinery processes convert the last remains of crude oil to high-end products such as gasoline and diesel. This was a result from a decreasing demand for oil fuel because power plants stopped using them and nuclear power was considered a major future supplier at the time. Another benefit was that Hycon limited the environmental footprint, decreasing the emission of sulphur dioxide from 7% to 0.2%.
CSR was a completely unknown concept back then, but looking back at these projects, A.Hak was already involved in projects aimed at reducing the environmental footprint. This 'social responsibility' was even more noticeable at the training program that took place in the Tricht headquarters, in which the unemployed were educated to become pipefitters. Together with the labour office in Tiel, these people were trained for a semester, after which they were proudly awarded the diploma for 'Pijpbewerking Industriële Montage', roughly translated as Pipeline Adaptation Industrial Assembly.

WORLD HISTORY

1988

CEASEFIRE IN THE LONG WAR BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ.

1988 is the year in which a very particular test is carried out. Waprog, the drinking water company servicing the city of Winschoten and other northern Dutch areas, was experiencing accretion in their pipelines. A.Hak Marum investigated whether this could be removed using solid 'plugs'. This method would later be called 'pigging' and it became one of the areas of expertise of A.Hak Industrial Services. The Waprog company magazine reported that the test was a great success. A hard and a soft plug were sent into the pipeline successfully, followed by a device that 'looked quite like a rotating steel brush' andpolished the pipelines on the inside. After that, the accretion was virtually entirely removed and Waprog decided to seriously consider using this technology for cleaning operational pipelines. The price tag A.Hak would put on these tasks would be an important decision criterion. As it turned out a year later, A.Hak did not overprice, as a local newspaper reports that A.Hak was awarded the assignment to clean the pipelines, which were fifty to eighty years old but still in good condition, and mentioned 'it is possible that during these tasks, brown or even no water may come out of your faucet.'

Wytch Farm Oilfield Development.

Another World Gas Conference was also scheduled in 1988, this time in Washington D.C. By now, the spouses Misses Hendriksen and Misses Van Geenhuizen were quite experienced and decided to take their husbands along for the trip, only to support the ladies, of course. In the United Kingdom, A.Hak Ltd. was awarded a marvellous assignment by BP Petroleum Development Ltd: the construction of a number of oil pipelines and power and communication cables for the Wytch Farm Oilfield Development in the beautiful Dorset. This was another project proving that the women's rights movement definitely was on the road to success.

The surprise surrounding these developments become clear with the following quote from the Hakblad magazine: 'Given that the oil discoveries were made in an area famous for its beautiful scenery and historic values, one could imagine that the client's focus was drawn towards environmental aspects. As a result, the Hak-staff had to get accustomed to receiving instructions from female environmental supervisors.' In the same summer, two other English assignments were awarded, for British Gas in Cornwall, and for BP in Southampton Waters.

INTERVIEW
MARIANNE VAN RIEMSDIJK THE VOICE OF A.HAK

‘A.Hak Tricht, Marianne speaking’

‘Good morning, A.Hak Tricht, Marianne speaking.’ People who regularly call the office have gotten quite accustomed to the friendly voice of receptionist Marianne van Riemsdijk. ‘The contacts I have on the phone, but also with people at the front desk, helping them get to their destination, always appealed to me’, said ‘The voice of A.Hak’.

‘I started here as a phone operator at the age of 32. Before that I served coffee to the offices and substituted if the regular phone operator called in sick. When I was asked to join the A.Hak crew on a full-time basis, I immediately grabbed the opportunity. My children had grown a bit older by then, so I could return to having a full-time job without worrying about them too much.’
‘The first years I always answered the phone without mentioning my name. After a while, it became customary, as with other companies, to introduce yourself. Next to being polite, I also did it out of practical purposes, as some callers directly started to tell me why they were calling. That sometimes happens when one of our mechanics visited a client and a follow-up appointment needs to be rescheduled. By clearly stating who is on the phone, you can spare people having to tell the same story twice as I can only redirect them to their destination.’
‘I remember the current Board, Marco and Mariska van Geenhuizen, from when they were kids and took on their first summer jobs here. The family is really involved with their staff. If something’s up, you just know you can knock on their door and they’ll do whatever they can to help you. Nobody’s just a number that A.Hak, on the contrary. It’s a group of people who are really close and are always there for each other. And although the company grew significantly over the years, it’s still the family company it was years ago. I certainly hope to stay a part of this family for years to come.’

In 1988 A.Hak set foot in a country it had not visited before: Syria. Here, the Euphrates was to be crossed along a 350 metres length. Special wenches were rapidly assembled for this project by A.Hak Materieel, while a profile suction dredger was converted into a cutter suction dredger. The 24” pipeline used in the project is locally coated by Conline. A year later, A.Hak conquers this river again, as two 16” and one 10” pipeline for crude oil are constructed 30 kilometres from the first location.

WORLD HISTORY
1988
OSAMA BIN LADEN FOUNDS AL-QAEDA.

May 1989 is a month remembered by many. For the executive staff, the transition is announced from driving personally owned cars with an expense allowance, to driving in a lease car. This new regulation will come into effect from January 1st 1990. Willem van Geenhuizen already warns that, considering the fact that these cars will be taxed as income, it will be quite an expensive event for some of the staff.

In 1989, A.Hak expands further by purchasing Bronkhorst Industries, a company located in Vorden and Hoogezand that provided high-end installation and maintenance work. The staff of 40 includes 27 mechanics/welders. In addition to this company, the second half of the eighties included various other acquisitions of less familiar names. Companies that were divested later or, as usually happened, were integrated in one of the existing departments. Isotechnic, a company specialising in pipeline isolation and acquired together with Conline, is one example.

Soil decontamination, the core business of Geokinetics acquired in 1988, eventually proved not to fit within the Board’s vision for the group. The preamble of the Christmas edition of the Hakblad magazine makes another notice of this vision for the future: ‘….a company focusing on the construction and installation of complete pipeline projects in its broadest definition.’ Just six months later this definition is once again expanded, as the June 1990 preamble reads: ‘Since yesteryear, the thought of actualising more cable work, in addition to pipeline work, has been present. Regional initiatives have already commenced autonomously. The company ‘Snijders’s Loon en Exploitatie Maatschappij (which was silently added to the A.Hak group) is moving around in the market of joint pipeline and cable constructions. We do however feel the need of expanding our position to be able to work on a national scale, in order to improve our answer to the demands of clients in the field of joint construction.’ For that reason, it was also tried to acquire the Van Gelder firm, located in Hattem. Today, A.Hak still regularly encounters this company as the ‘Van Gelder Groep’.

WORLD HISTORY
NOVEMBER 9TH
1989

FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL.

The vision of constructing pipeline and cable infrastructure within the same projects was based on an important shift in the market. In the early nineties, A.Hak's domestic pipeline construction services were offered to two types of clients: drinking water companies and gas companies. Due to newly introduced EEC legislation, it now became a possibility for energy corporations to take over the regional gas companies. In order to remain able to stay a preferred partner for these large energy corporations, rather than being pushed back to a role of subcontracting, adding cable constructions to the portfolio became essential. A little help was required in gaining all required expertise, that's why the year 1990 starts with a take-over of the cable and drilling company M. Postema, located in the same city of Assen as the aforementioned Snijder. Upon this acquisition, the North and East of the Netherlands could be entirely serviced.
After this take-over, it only took little time before Snijder moved its operations to the building next to that of Postema. The two start cooperating seamlessly, savings costs and sharing best practices in the process, as said Mr. H.T. Holthuis, managing director of Postema. He emphasises why A.Hak needs these two newcomers. 'The merger of the Electricity Company Groningen Drenthe, with various gas and CAI companies located in the region, strongly indicates a market shift towards larger and more broadly oriented distribution units. Approaching combined projects together and using the individual know-how for this purpose, will lead to a more solidified trust in the future for all of us.'

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
1990

END ON THE BAN ON GAS USAGE IN LARGE POWER PLANTS. START OF THE LIBERALISATION OF THE EUROPEAN ENERGY INDUSTRY.

With the North and East of the country covered, initiatives are also being expanded in the Western part of the Netherlands. The city of Rotterdam is busy creating a new railroad tunnel. A.Hak contributes in getting this job done, by rerouting parts of the Rotterdam district heating pipelines. Work is also carried out on the water and gas pipelines and the power cables, including 3 x 25 kV. Combined projects are also completed at the Maasvlakte, where rerouting tasks for Gasunie include two parallel 36" gas pipelines, but also include high voltage cables, telephone cables and a water pipeline. Lastly, the Recreational Department of the city of Rotterdam assigned A.Hak to equip an entire recreation park in Hoek van Holland with power and television cables, while in the older segment of the park, all sewage, water and gas pipelines were replaced.

Misses Van Geenhuizen en Misses Hendriksen competed with the brightest of men during various international exhibitions. After Lausanne (1982, left bottom), Washington D.C. (1986, left top), they visited Moscow (right) in 1990, where it was only polite to drink a shot of vodka.

After completing the large water project in Saudi Arabia between the early and mid-eighties, the Middle East remains a source of a modest amount of projects in the oil and gas industry. In 1990, the Euphrates is crossed for the third consecutive year. This time a 'pipe bundle' of five lines is constructed, a gas pipeline, an oil pipeline, a condensate return line and two 2" synthetic pipelines for future communication lines. Thus the approach of combining pipelines with cables is also used far away from home. Quite a distance away from Syria, although just around the corner from a Dutch perspective, A.Hak Services completes a project in Saudi Arabia for the cleaning and drying of various kerosene pipelines on Khamis Mushayt Airport.

WORLD HISTORY
JUNE 12TH
1990

IRAQ INVADES KUWAIT.

The construction of a 36” and 48” pipeline for Gasunie and the NAM at the Balgzand gas treatment station close to Den Helder.

Back home the group was further enforced. To supply horizontal direction drilling services, microtunneling, a new entity is formed with the name Hak/HDI. The second half of that name is derived from the French partner HDI, which stands for Horizontal Drilling International. Not much later, this partnership will change upon A.Hak acquiring HDI Europe and HDI USA. American firm Union Carbide sells its subsidiary Ucar Industrial Services, which is directly rebranded to A.Hak Industrial Services. Looking at its name, it needs no explanation that providing industrial services is their core business, including cooling furnaces, cleaning pipelines and other industrial appliances using nitrogen and steel grit, the so called ‘sand jetting’.

All in all 1990 was a very eventful year which added many new activities to the portfolio. Reflecting on these events at the end of the year, leads to the undeniable conclusion that A.Hak was no longer the company that only constructed pipelines and built accompanying facilities. Other activities on that moment include microtunneling, insulation and hot tapping so that reparations and new connections could be completed without having to shut down the entire system, internal – and after expanding Conline’s activities – external coating of pipelines, underground and overhead cabling laying and industrial services. Furthermore A.Hak keeps on innovating and is often the first in line to master new foreign technologies. New welding methods are watched closely, as are new ‘no dig’ renovation opportunities, in which pipelines are given a second lifespan without the need to dig them up.

WORLD HISTORY
JANUARY 17TH
1991

WITH AN AIRSTRIKE CALLED OPERATION DESERT STORM, A COALITION LED BY THE UNITED STATES INTERFERES IN THE ‘GULF WAR’.

That last activity is further fortified in 1991 by entering into a joint venture with the Kanal Müller Gruppe from the now undivided Germany. The Wall fell and that also meant new opportunities for A.Hak. One of those opportunities is the creation of another joint venture with a Polish firm that specialises in manufacturing and assembling pipe work. It became a year with an immense amount of projects that led to positive financial results for almost every group member.

The years of expansion however, were not quite over yet. Early in 1992, Bosman Zevenaar is added to the group, a company with core activities in cable and pipeline projects. Terra Vac, specialised in soil decontamination, is a new branch on the tree, one that is however shared with two other shareholders.
Another purchase is the firm Kaal-van der Linden, located in the three Southern cities of Oss, Roosendaal and Eindhoven. Although this purchase was originally made because A.Hak needed cable expertise reinforcement in the South, Kaal contributed a whole lot more. What to think about an own mast factory in which not only street lights, sports pitches and terrain lighting are designed and manufactured, but also columns and masts for road signs and advertisements, antenna systems, radar and surveillance installations, wind turbines, radio connections and overhead wires. The technical contracting department provides for high and low voltage networks, but also for gas and water pipelines, sewerage and paving services.
In Noord-Holland, the Northwestern province of the Netherlands, the cable activities are further expanded by purchasing the shares of the firm Van Essen Halfweg. At that point in time, Van Essen is 127 years old and has four core activities: cable works and public lighting, telecommunication, electrical engineering and security. Clients include highly interesting names such as Schiphol International Airport, Akzo Chemie and state owned phone operator PTT.

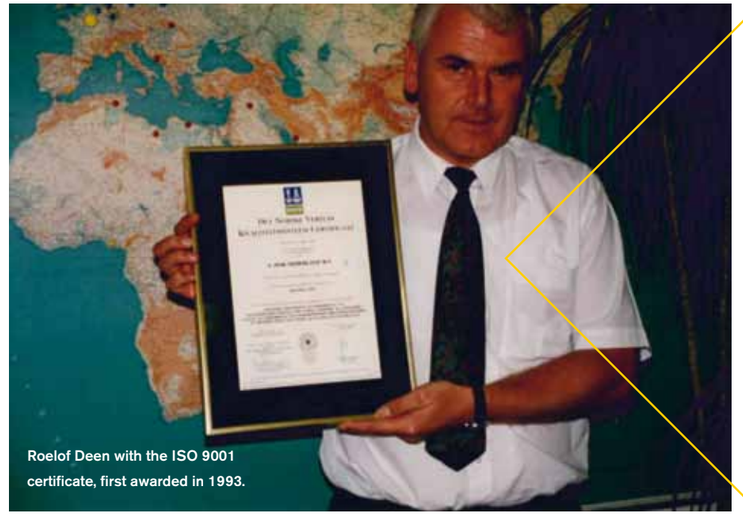
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
JANUARY 1ST
1993
SCHENGEN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG, GERMANY AND FRANCE.

Resulting from the two latter purchases, combined with Postema/ Snijders in the north and internal experience, a cable technology department with nationwide coverage is created within a very short time. The north is fortified even further in 1993 with the purchase of J. Fidder Kabelwerken, specialised not only in laying cables, but also in their assembly. A.Hak's drilling activities are, after the HDI purchase, absolutely industry leading. The firm also expands internationally, by acquiring companies in Denmark and Germany, expanding business in England and a new cooperation in Belgium.

Is this not a little too much expansionism? A preamble from the Hakblad magazine might clarify more, the December 1992 preamble to be precise. 'Upon reading about these developments, many of you will wonder: where does it stop and how will it be kept together? And you are right, the latter is our largest concern and will prove decisive for our future growth. Only if we succeed in efficiently working as one, will our future be good and secure. Together we carry the conviction that only a broad offer of services, located throughout various countries, will validate our future right to exist. This of course in our classic style of "stop talking, start working".

Sincerely, 'Wim and Gerda van Geenhuizen'. A particularly informal signature, as previous magazines always spoke of 'W.D. van Geenhuizen' to conclude the preamble written by the chief executive. There was a justification for this breach of protocol, and it was a big one. W.D., or as you like, Wim van Geenhuizen was on that very moment, no longer the Chief Executive. As of September 7th 1992, he had handed the ultimate responsibility of A.Hak Nederland over to Roelof Deen. Just like that? Without any warning? Not entirely. Three days before, on September 4th 1992, Wim and Gerda celebrated their 25th marriage anniversary and during the festivities, he had announced the upcoming transfer. As the former Chief Executive, he took a seat in a transition team that would form a broader management team in the coming eighteen months. After that, he and his wife would retire and only focus on the 'interpersonal relations' within the firm.


Conline.


Roelof Deen with the ISO 9001 certificate, first awarded in 1993.

This however did not happen before the broad spectrum of services was expanded just a bit more. Conline gained a new factory and office in the Rotterdam area after the acquisition of Key & Kramer in Maassluis. And the A.Hak family could also grow a little more in the south, when ACB Apparatenbouw was acquired in 1994, a company now known by the name Mechanical Contracting Limburg (MCL). A.Hak Born moved into the location of this new company. And again all staff members were explicitly called upon to not only think about their own work, but to also emphasise the qualities of their sister companies when talking to potential clients.

In the spring of 1994, all adjustments to the board were completed. A.Hak got its own management team and was no longer thriving on the shoulders of that one strong man and that one strong woman. Gerda and Wim van Geenhuizen informed that they hoped to remain active behind the scenes for years to come, and then stepped back from their place in the spotlights.

‘Everything revolves around the client’

NAME
Arie Smits

POSITIONS
Commerce & Prequalification Manager at A.Hak

Director at A.Hak Infranet

‘A.Hak scores over 90 percent in prequalifications for new projects. This is a major indication of the high level of trust the industry has in our company and approach. We also experience a continuous increase in the amount of multiannual contracts’, tells 64 year old Arie Smits, the Commerce & Prequalification Manager and, since January 2013, Director of A.Hak Infranet.

‘Over 21 years ago, I started at the firm as a regional director for A.Hak West. After that, I took on responsibility for the sales approach and Public Relations. I took a seat in the editorial board of the Haktueel company magazine and also updated the news section on our website. That was a relatively small extra task in those days, one that could easily be fitted into a busy schedule. Not so much today, as a result of company growth we now have a full-time communication manager who manages these tasks’, Smits tells.
Over the past few years, the veteran has been both a witness and participant in A.Hak’s transformation to an organisation with worldwide operations, able to service the entire delivery chain. ‘Engineering, construction, maintenance, you name it, we have a complete service portfolio that allows us to fully unburden our clients. Our focus on innovation also keeps increasing, resulting in our firm moving upwards in the value chain and being able to support our clients even better in the various complex challenges they encounter.’

TOP SCORE
The success of this approach is proven by the high scores A.Hak receives for prequalifications. Smits: ‘We take pride in scoring well over 90 percent. It emphasises that innovation has a high priority for us and that the industry perceives us as a solid and reliable partner. Over the past few years, we made considerable investments in our staff’s customer care skills, but also in equipment, innovation and education. We listen to what our clients have to say and proactively think along with them in the preliminary phase of the project. In the highly exceptional event that something does go wrong, we do everything we possibly can to find the best solution together with our client.’

WATER FOR LIFE
In addition to the commercial operations, Smits is also part of the team responsible for sponsoring and events. ‘To name something, we’re the most senior skybox owner at the Assen TT. A.Hak also focuses its attention on projects revolving around Corporate Social Responsibility. Sponsor projects include the Water for Life project hosted by water supply company Vitens, as we believe that providing access to clean and safe drinking water is essential for human dignity.’

‘In the coming years, we want to consolidate our domestic coverage to maintain the excellent level of service we offer our clients. Furthermore we endeavour to increase our added value, which allows us to keep moving upwards in the value chain and thus achieve higher returns’, said the 50 year old Frisian Tjeerd Dijkstra, Director at A.Hak Infranet.

‘Keep moving up in the value chain’

NAME
Tjeerd Dijkstra

POSITION
Director at A.Hak Infranet

More than 600 A.Hak Infranet experts have a key responsibility in the construction and maintenance of infrastructures used by everybody: from gas, water, electricity and streetlights, up to communication and traffic control systems.
With ten locations all across the Netherlands, A.Hak Infranet guarantees her clients nationwide coverage. ‘Most of our clients are network operators with whom, in most cases, we have had relations for several years’, Dijkstra clarifies. ‘Furthermore we also have various fields of expertise in our organisation, our staff is well-trained, we have expert knowledge and great relations with our sister companies. This means that our clients can entrust us with pretty much every challenge they meet.’

CHALLENGING PROJECTS
Over the past few years, Dijkstra and his staff have worked on various challenging projects. ‘We completed a project for Groningen Seaports in which we constructed an overhead steam condensate pipeline for the Chemiepark Delfzijl. During this project, we were not only responsible for the engineering tasks, but also for carrying out the construction itself, as well as management and maintenance of the installation. This is a great example of us moving up in the value chain and thus achieving better organisational returns.’
The various district heating projects A.Hak Infranet carries out emphasise the company’s innovative and sustainable signature. ‘A great example is the SlimNet project in Purmerend where we replaced old steel pipelines in hundreds of flats with synthetic materials. This lowers energy consumption and decreases malfunctions. A.Hak Infranet also works on similar projects in various other cities.’

PERSONAL FREEDOM
Dijkstra is especially enthusiastic about the large degree of personal freedom A.Hak Infranet offers its staff. ‘The results are leading, but as a team we continuously endeavour to improve our company a small step every single day. The diverse projects we encounter ensure that no day is the same and work never gets dull.’

‘Continuous increase in offshore industry orders’

After completing various take-overs, Conline-Rhenania became an international industry leader in the field of internal and external coating of steel pipelines for oil, gas, water and other liquids. ‘The offshore industry is one of our accelerators’, said the 52 year old Director of Conline-Rhenania who started his career with the firm 26 years ago at A.Hak Pijpleidingen.

NAME
Cees van Overloop

POSITION
Director at Conline-Rhenania

Both companies have a very long history and possess a vast amount of experience. Rhenania was founded in 1902, while Conline’s history can even be traced back to 1850. ‘In 1986, Willem van Geenhuizen laid the groundwork for the current company by acquiring Conline, located in Bergen op Zoom’, Van Overloop recalls. ‘In that period, General Electric Plastic was an important client for A.Hak, many projects were carried out during maintenance shutdowns. The Key en Kramer factory in Maassluis, founded in 1850, was purchased in 1993, followed by the 1997 take-over of Schokindustrie’s concrete weight coating factory in Dutch Zwijndrecht. Once the acquisition of Rhenania Nijmegen was also completed in 2001, the current Conline-Rhenania group came to exist with its separate divisions for water, industrial, onshore and offshore services.’

SOLID POSITION

Over the past five years, Conline-Rhenania has made considerable investments to ensure an excellent delivery to the offshore segment. ‘Based on the large amount of qualifications we made for various oil companies, this was a year in which Conline-Rhenania became an established party in the offshore industry as we completed a large number of projects in it’, said Van Overloop. ‘Especially over the past few years, until recently led by my predecessor Jan Roelofs, we expanded our factories to obtain Europe’s most modern coating production lines.’ The Total qualification and subsequent assignment for 190 kilometres of pipelines for TOTAL’s Angola CIOV project are proof for Van Overloop that the company is heading the right way. Other Conline-Rhenania initiatives, such as founding the European Pipe Coating Platform with Europe’s most important gas companies, prove that Conline-Rhenania truly became an industry leader.

THE NEXT BIG LEAP

Based on the growth we experienced in these last years, the Van Geenhuizen family decided that we should build a new production location in Moerdijk, in addition to our three current locations in Maassluis, Dordrecht and Nijmegen. The considerable investment required for this expansion, is meant to catapult us into the highest segment in the industry within five years. Van Overloop acknowledges that this is, by far, the largest challenge the company has ever faced. ‘I am however very confident that we will achieve this goal, together with our great staff members, most of whom I have worked with at this firm for years.’

NAME
Jos van den Hurk

POSITION
Director at Kaal Masten

‘Let’s leave our children a world they can live in’

Kaal Masten, located in Oss, has delivered masts and columns of all possible sorts and sizes ever since they were invented. Recently, the company launched the new Spirit lighting column, a system that completely relies on solar energy and needs no connection to the energy grid. ‘A world premiere that substantiates our ambition in the field of sustainable business’, said 59 year old Director Jos van den Hurk.

The masts and columns built by Kaal Masten have become an integral part of the Dutch landscape. Light columns, traffic cameras and GSM towers, there is not much this company has not done in its field of expertise.

Kaal Masten was founded in the late forties by Theo Kaal Sr. and his wife. The early years mainly revolved around ground work such as installing electricity networks. Later, the first light columns were manufactured at their own location. ‘When the previous owner, Co Bakker, passed away in 1991, Willem van Geenhuizen bought the company shares in 1992’, so recollects Van der Hurk, who recently celebrated his 35 year anniversary as Director. ‘The construction segment was integrated within A.Hak Infranet, contributing to its current solid position in the cable industry in the Southern Netherlands. The mast factory went on autonomously and, being the first A.Hak manufacturing company, we grew out to become the industry leader we are today.’

ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

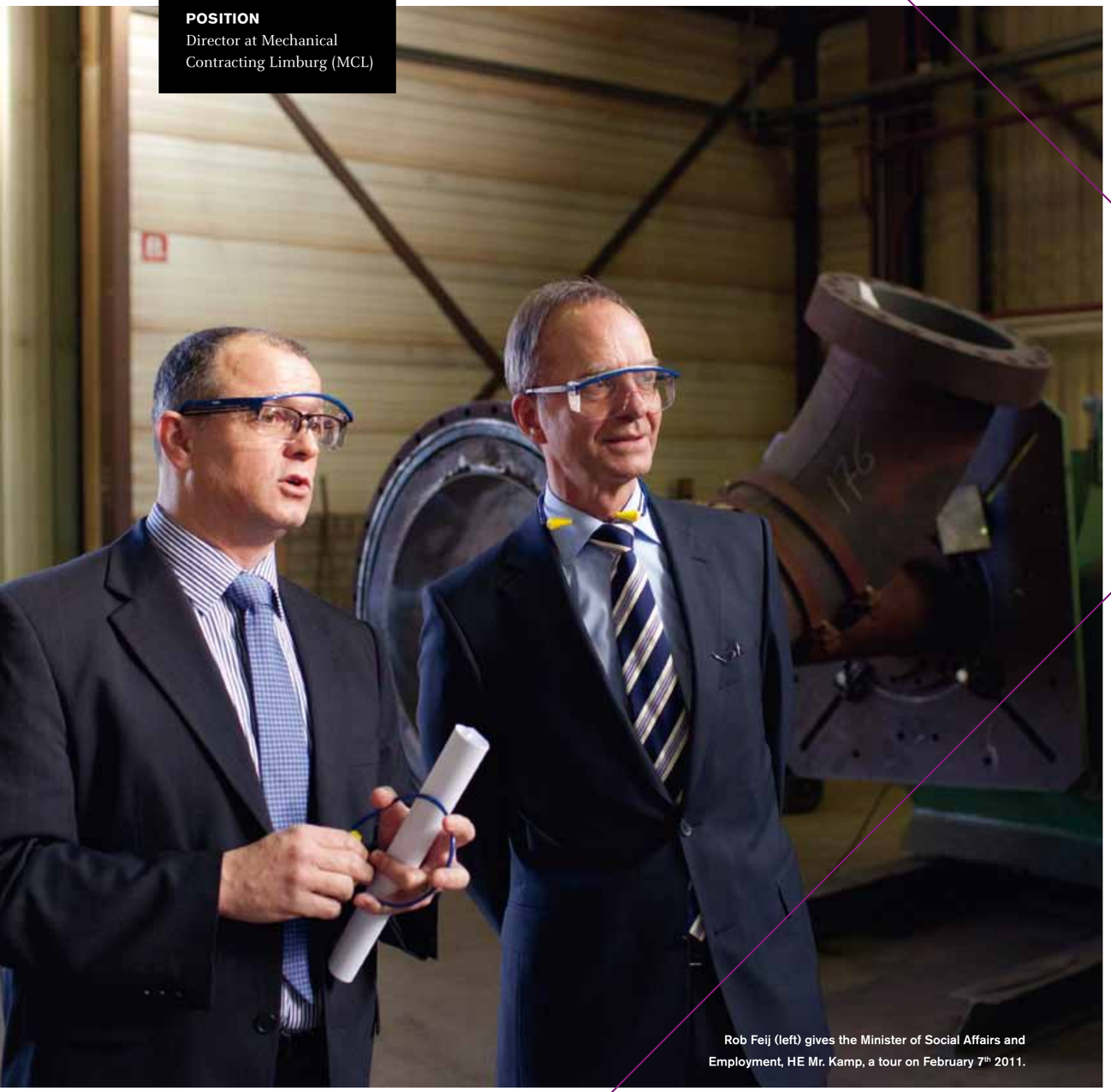
Sustainability is a top priority for Kaal Masten. Van den Hurk: ‘Of course that doesn’t just mean duplex printing or not using disposable coffee cups. I’m talking about decreasing the usage of raw materials, using foundation technology that is much more environmentally friendly or the recent introduction of the Spirit line. I believe it is very important that we leave this beautiful and habitable world to our children and grandchildren, without having to take our eyes of our business objectives. There is money to be made by acting entrepreneurial and decreasing the environmental footprint, so these two objectives certainly go hand in hand.’

TAKING PRIDE IN SPIRIT

Hence, the Chairman of the ‘Industriële Kring Oss’, a business association representing the interests of 45 large organisations with over 9,000 employees, takes great pride in the Spirit launch that took over three years to develop. ‘Years ago, I became convinced that solar powered street lighting is the future. It is a delight to experience the great interest shown in this innovative solution, both domestic as internationally.’

NAME
Rob Feij

POSITION
Director at Mechanical Contracting Limburg (MCL)



Rob Feij (left) gives the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, HE Mr. Kamp, a tour on February 7th 2011.

‘More and more orders from our sister companies’

‘MCL is completing an increasing number of projects for the other A.Hak companies. We recently received an order to deliver three large cable drum rollers for A.Hak Electron, while also manufacturing 75 cable pulling machines in our workshop for them’, said the 51 year old Rob Feij, the Director of Mechanical Contracting Limburg (MCL) in Born.

MCL, the former ‘ACB Apparatenbouw’, has been part of the A.Hak family since 1994. The company, employing a staff of 60, designs and manufactures devices such as heat exchangers, columns, reactors and pressure tanks. ‘We also have our own engineering department, allowing us to deliver custom work for our industrial clients’, according to Feij.

CLOSE COOPERATION
A close cooperation exists between the experts from Limburg and A.Hak Industrie Born, whose staff has worked at MCL’s location since the nineties. ‘Our location is quite spacious, so it was only logical for the A.Hak Industrie Born staff to move into the MCL workshop and office’, Feij says. ‘The staff members of this A.Hak company are real experts in the field of GRP pipeline systems. The company was already located at the same Chemelot business park as us, which means the staff already knew pretty much everything about the location.’

VAST EXPERIENCE
A.Hak Industrie Born has obtained vast experience in the construction of both overhead as underground pipelines and industrial installation projects in our region. Feij says, ‘We still benefit from that, as MCL designed and manufactures various machines used by the staff of A.Hak Industrie Born for their installation projects.’

The MCL Director also emphasises that his staff receives an increasing amount of orders from the other A.Hak companies. ‘In addition to the cable drum rollers and cable pulling machines for A.Hak Electron, we also recently completed an interesting project for A.Hak Leidingbouw. Here, we constructed a special pontoon that was used on the IJ Lake near Amsterdam to interconnect pipeline segments. A.Hak Leidingbouw also awarded us a project for Gasunie, for whom we are constructing an air buffer tank measuring over 50 metres.’

NAME
Peter van der Ploeg

POSITION
Business unit manager at A.Hak Industrie Botlek and H.J. Mertens

‘Utilise market opportunities to the fullest’

‘The large variety of interconnecting disciplines we have available within A.Hak, is one of our most powerful assets. By managing them smartly, we can utilise the opportunities presented in the industry to the fullest’, according to 54 year old Peter van der Ploeg, the Business unit manager of A.Hak Industrie and H.J. Mertens.

‘I often visit clients who, for example, need pipeline inspections. A simple phone call to A.Hak industrial Services then suffices to get the right people in touch with each other. The same goes for clients who, in addition to pipeline work, need high-voltage connections, in which case A.Hak Electron receives the phone call. That’s how we interconnect various elements of the supply chain’, Van der Ploeg states.
Having completed his intermediate technical school for road and waterway engineering, he also attended Avans University in Breda for a bachelor as a general and technical pipeline engineer at a later age. ‘I started working with A.Hak Rijnmond in 1987 as a fitter. My manager at that time, Pieter Jan Dam, told me that one had to experience working with the men on the construction site before becoming able to fulfil management tasks later on. After working in various managerial jobs, I moved to Bronkhorst Industries to become the company director, a company just incorporated by A.Hak that was to be fully integrated into the organisation.’

GAS RECEIVING STATIONS

Currently, Van der Ploeg is the Business unit manager for A.Hak Industrie Botlek and H.J. Mertens, the latter became part of A.Hak in 2011. ‘We’re currently in the process of integrating these companies, while carrying out projects in the administrative area. A.Hak Industrie focuses on overhead and underground pipeline projects for large industrial clients such as Kuwait Petroleum and BP. Last year we renewed a segment of the underground fire extinguishing water system for BP, but we’re also busy with projects for Stork and Vopak. H.J. Mertens on its turn has decades of experience in the design, construction and maintenance of gas receiving stations. The knowledge of H.J. Mertens is pretty much the final link in the delivery chain for A.Hak. Last year we entered into a framework agreement with Gasunie to set up and commission new gas receiving stations while renovating existing ones.’

SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

While Van der Ploeg still very much enjoys his work, he does think that the business environment became tougher and more formalised. ‘In my early years we could easily make gentlemen’s agreements with clients, any issues that arose were always solved. Today everything is arranged much more tightly.’ At the same time, he keeps enjoying projects that are completed within the stated timeframe and budget and exceed the expectations of customers. ‘We recently completed a project for BP for which we were thanked extensively. At the end of the day, that’s our goal. Happy customers and earning a few bucks in the process, that’s what it is all about.’

TOWARDS A NEW MILLENNIUM

Through turbulent times

The changing of the guard in the A.Hak board seemed to take place in a quiet time, but that idea did not remain intact for long. The Tricht headquarters was evacuated, the Srebrenica massacre took place, the internet created its own industry that seemed to collapse as quickly as it arose. And events as the millennium bug and Nine Eleven were still to come.

After the 1985 acquirement of the A.Hak Pijpleidingen shares by Van Geenhuizen, the company's service portfolio – or rather, that of the group – was heavily and consecutively expanded over the ten following years, both in the Netherlands as internationally. Such a broadly oriented company was a perfect match for the bulky contract scored by the offshore division. After a process that took thirteen months and that also was the first to be tendered in accordance with European guidelines, the firm signed a multimillion euro contract with the NAM on April 28th 1994. The contract comprised of maintenance, modification and servicing tasks for all offshore NAM locations as well as the factory in Den Helder.

Signing of the offshore contract with the NAM.

MESCO: way ahead of its time

Halfway through the eighties, the NAM created the basis for one of the most progressive contract forms in the Dutch offshore industry. The MES-contract (Maintenance, Engineering and Services) was way ahead of its time. This new contract form, in which the former A.Hak Offshore would work with various conglomerate partners until well into 1999, resulted in measurable annual savings of 25%, a 30% decrease in shutdown periods and revenues of hundreds of millions of Guilders.

Purchasing the equipment and taking over various employees from the English company Norwell LTD, formed the 1985 start of A.Hak's offshore activities. From the Wormerveer location, the company with a staff of fifteen started with mostly small adjustments to the offshore platforms of the NAM, connecting new wells, small deck expansions and preparing shutdowns.
At the end of 1989, the contract between A.Hak Offshore and the NAM was extended for another three years, with an option for a fourth year. The contract delivered more maintenance and construction work for all NAM offshore locations. Work was carried out according to schedule and within a few years the staff increased to 75 men. The initial annual revenue of 20 million Guilders also steadily increased.

EXTRA SAFETY MEASURES

Work rapidly expanded after the catastrophe on the Piper Alpha offshore oil production platform in the North Sea in 1988. After a big explosion in the gas compression module, a fire broke out that killed 167 people. It was the biggest disaster on an oil platform up to that date, and caused oil companies to immediately fortify their safety measures.

One of these measures was the installation of remotely controlled dampers which were to close down the pipelines if fire would break out. Also there were new Free Fall lifeboat installations being constructed. These were able to instantly get the personnel of the platform in case of a calamity, rather than using the traditional lifeboats that were attached to the platform with winches.

INNOVATIVE CONTRACTS

Together with various subcontractors, A.Hak offshore was only responsible for construction work in this period. Engineering, maintenance and services were not yet part of work assigned. The NAM however, was working on the development of a new sort of contract in the early nineties, in which all requested services would be delivered by one partner. The MES (Maintenance, Engineering and Services) contract for the 28 oil platforms and the Den Helder location both came to exist, and the offshore industry was revolutionised. One of the main objectives for the NAM was to be able to monitor the process from a distance while outsourcing the rest to a reliable partner. That is why the contract contained various incentives to ensure that the contractor was not only rewarded for doing its work, but also and perhaps mostly for added value such as platform availability, safety performance and decreasing shutdown durations.

INNOVATIVE ORGANISATION

Based on this innovative contract form, the NAM was, by far, the most progressive company in the Netherlands. Parties involved were not only rewarded with words, but also with deeds for the added value they delivered with their work. A.Hak Offshore entered into a syndicate with ABB and Tot&Beers (later known as Fabricom) under the name MESCO. Between 1994 and 1999, this syndicate achieved great results, such as a 30% decrease of shutdown duration and revenues of hundreds of millions of Guilders.
After completion of this contract, A.Hak Offshore remained operational for years, working for names as ELF Petroland, AMOCO, Unocal and other firms. The MESCO-experience and splendour might have passed, but today A.Hak International and Conline-Rhenania are once again doing more and more work for the offshore industry.

In the same period, Holland's primary airport Schiphol is also expanding, one result of which is the creation of the famous, yet for travellers often infamous, railroad tunnel. The men of Van Essen in Halfweg cleared the trajectory of old cables and pipelines and rerouted them to a new trajectory.
This was all combined work, as the public lighting work took place parallel with the construction and rerouting of high, medium and low voltage power cables and the construction of communication cables.

The first Hakblad magazine of a new year did often start with some lamentations about wetness. After all, snow and rain do have significant consequences for the productivity of the companies. However, 1995 was a year in which the water really worked against A.Hak. And not just against A.Hak: nearly a quarter million people and hundreds of thousands of animals in the 'Rivierenland' were to depart head over heels, leaving everything behind, as rising water levels became an enormous threat.
Back to the end of January 1995, where it just keeps raining in the Belgian Ardennes and Northern France. The water levels in the Dutch rivers the Meuse, Rhine and Waal rise to levels unprecedented for modern times. On January 25th, the water in the Rhine near Lobith – where the river enters the Netherlands – rises with an astonishing two metres, while the Waal near Zaltbommel rises with one metre.
In Limburg, the Meuse also causes problems, and the residents of the towns of Borgharen and Itteren are urgently advised to leave. On Friday the 27th of January, the Rhine floods the city centre of Cologne and the dikes in the region Land of Meuse and Waal are closed for all traffic. The Rhine near Lobith rises to 15.02 metres above sea level,

A.Hak installed an outfall in Swansea Bay, South Wales for Wales Water. These pipelines were normally delivered to the construction site in 12 meter segments to be assembled on-site, but A.Hak requested the Danish manufacturer to have two complete 500 meter segments shipped overseas to Wales.

The Waal Dike near Ochten almost breached.

while the Waal near Zaltbommel reached 5.85 metres above sea level. The next day those levels increase with 40 and 51 centimetres and the IJsselkade in Deventer is also closed for the public. Another day later, on Sunday January 29th, the heavy rainfall expands to Holland and Germany, while it also continues to rain in Belgium and France. On this Monday, the authorities send out an urgent evacuation advice to 75,000 people in the catchment area of the Meuse and the Waal, and on Tuesday January 31st the moment finally comes: the evacuation is now mandatory and applies to various Dutch regions adjacent to one another, including the Betuwe where the A.Hak headquarters is located in Tricht. Calculations show that many places in these areas will be flooded with approximately five metres of water, should the dikes give in. But, they don't, although it came very close on one occasion near Ochten. This however does not affect the absolute exodus caused in the Tricht headquarters, where the staff is working nearly 24 hours a day to prepare and move all valuables to safety.

It would take until Saturday February 4th, about a week later, until the Minister of Internal Affairs granted the first evacuees permission to return back to their homes.

Kaal Technische Aanneming wins a five million Guilder contract in 1995. The job? Delivering, mounting and maintaining the public lighting on the A15 and A16 highways. The mast factory will deliver the masts, Kaal Technische Aanneming fulfils the technical aspects of the project, while Van Essen Netwerken cares for the cabling work and assembly. Although all of these sister companies are mentioned separately, it is also called 'one of the greatest assignments for A.Hak Kabeltechniek'.

Names of clients often returning in this period are the Duinwaterbedrijf Zuid-Holland (roughly translated as Dune Water Company) with its enormous concrete tubes, and Gasunie. Mentioning all these large projects certainly should not imply that A.Hak only throve (or thrives) on the big names and jobs. Throughout the years, there is probably no city or village left in the Netherlands, in which A.Hak did not dig its way through streets or dug trenches next to railroad and tram tracks. Everywhere in the Netherlands, the group's staff was working, often for municipal water and power companies, who grew out to become more regionally oriented over time. The exact name of the firm mentioned on the bus, tent or excavator of these colleagues, well, that's a different story. It could be A.Hak, but also Van Essen, Bronkhorst, Kaal, Fidder, or Postema, to name a few of many options.
At the end of 1996, this clutter of names was somewhat simplified with a new organisational structure, which did not only clarify, but also led to an enrichment of the vocabulary of the average employee. Two new words were introduced that were used everywhere: integration and implementation. Integration was defined as forming regions by merging the cable and pipeline activities, which was important for the locations in Assen, Halfweg and Oss. The word 'implementation' rang another bell, which focused on the new IT system Triton.

INNOVATION

1996

A.HAK REGISTERS DOMAIN NAMES.

For the average Hak staff member, times must have been hard. At the office all sorts of new things are implemented, while you are also expected to drive down the digital highway. And if that is not enough, your company is also merged with various other companies to form an integrated region. The spring 1997 hexathlon, organised for the eleventh consecutive year, offered a great opportunity to experience that these new regions adapted quite quickly. After all, sports bring people together, as does battling a joint enemy.

Hexathlon through the years

INNOVATIONS

1997

GOOGLE'S SEARCH ENGINE IS LAUNCHED.

The year 1998 starts with an EPC contract in Syria. Next to 'construction', it means that 'engineering' and 'procurement' (of equipment and materials) now also become part of A.Hak's responsibility. The contract encompassed the adjustment of two existing metering and regulating stations. In the meantime, PDO, an oil company in Oman partially owned by Shell, qualified A.Hak as one of very few contractors to weld Duplex Stainless Steel. The tests are carried out in Tricht, after which the welding of a 6" gas pipeline, used to power a new power plant in the hot, Arab country can begin.
Another group member busy in the Arab world is A.Hak Industrial Services, which was relocated to Dutch town Rhenen sometime before. Adma Opco in the United Arab Emirates is supported with a service that, after the acquisition of the company Seatec, also became part of the service portfolio: pigging, inspecting pipelines which are complex to inspect. The South American market, growing steadily over the years, is another place where A.Hak cherishes high expectations and even scored some new projects.
These upsides however, cannot hide the fact that 1998 went down in history as a very difficult year. A.Hak therefore started with a reorganisation in the last year of the twentieth century, which is, let's not sugar-coat it, a pretty word for downsizing: farewells were spoken out to a number of people, something quite painful for a company that could look back on years and years of hiring new staff. A.Hak had anticipated on a large growth of the German market but had to acknowledge, as did many other firms, that this potential would not capitalise. As a result, the firm had to say goodbye to its German, English and Danish staff.
1999 was therefore a stressful year. A.Hak was challenged to find the way up again, while the market was not cooperating, competition was hard and the mergers in the utility industry resulted into a phase in which these large companies were focusing much more on their internal processes and much less with their role as a client.
Another scary phenomenon came around the corner, something that could – at least according to some prophets of doom – could cause a total collapse of society: the millennium bug. All in all, the 1999 New Year's speech was not as festive as it had been in the previous years, which was an extra disappointment because the reception also acknowledged the 25th anniversary of Wim en Gerda van Geenhuizen's involvement with the company.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1999

BILLIONS ARE INVESTED OUT OF FEAR FOR THE MILLENNIUM BUG.

With or without the millennium bug, the world still existed on January 1st 2000. The economy even seemed to grow just a bit at the dawn of this new millennium, partially caused by a thriving IT industry. This trend already announced itself earlier – A.Hak had anticipated by entering into a combination with the specialised firm Hoogeboom from Spijkenisse – as the market now buzzed about the GSM network, internet connections and fibreglass cables. Early in 2000, the North region announces that although it will not freeze in Frisia, and the famous Eleven cities ice-skating tour thus cannot be held, this does mean that a very own eleven cities tour can be held: connecting a fibreglass network for KPN and CasTel. Along this route, eleven telephone exchanges in just as many towns are to be interconnected. Similar projects are awarded by KPN in the other two Northern provinces Drenthe and Groningen, where various fibreglass networks are to be installed. The second quarter of the year 2000 delivers a three-year contract with KPN Telecom for the three Northern provinces, with an option to extend the agreement for another three years. KPN is also a client for the East Region and thus becomes an important name for A.Hak.

The Grote Werken (Large Assignments) department is supplied with work by the construction of the Dutch HSL, a high speed train connection, as well as the Betuwelijn, a railroad track connecting the Port of Rotterdam with Germany. In most of these assignments, cables and pipelines are rerouted, sometimes using drilling techniques, to cross the railroad track. Between De Zweth and Schiedam, a 40" water pipeline is constructed for the Europoort Water Company, while an 8" ethylene pipeline with a length of no less than 200 kilometres is constructed in France.

A 200 kilometre ethylene pipeline is constructed in France.

After years of perseverance, A.Hak once again scored a new project in Saudi Arabia: a 135 kilometre water pipeline from Al Khobar to Hofuf.

Another great development in 2000 is the acquisition of Rhenania, the coating company from Nijmegen that proved to be a great addition to Conline. Together, Conline and Rhenania now had production locations in the cities Maassluis, Dordrecht and Nijmegen, while a joint sales office was occupied in Waardenburg. From this constellation, the companies started their process of growing towards each other to become the current Conline-Rhenania; written with a hyphen.

After years of making proposals, perseverance and keeping spirits high, a new Saudi Arabian project arrives in 2001 for the Saline Water Conversion Corporation. And it's a big one: constructing a 56" water pipeline from Al Khobar to Hofuf over a length of 135 kilometres. This event is mentioned in the A.Hak magazine with a typical A.Hak tone of voice: 'Today, August 11th 2001, it is not freezing in Al Khobar: 48 degrees Celsius.'

All this revelry however, was followed by a couple of hefty setbacks. Just when A.Hak combined its telecommunications activities in an autonomous Telecom department, the internet bubble collapsed, leading to a large number of bankruptcies in the industry and a general negative sentiment. The energy industry also did not yet bounce back, as the process of liberalisation was still on its way. This new, liberalised industry meant having less individual clients as merger after merger

combined them into large conglomerates. Not only did these corporations not prioritise investments in this period, after every change it was a surprise to see where the daily contacts, used to working with A.Hak, were to be found in the organisation.

WORLD HISTORY
SEPT. 11TH
2001

AL QAEDA COMMITS MULTIPLE TERRORIST ATTACKS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Amidst these troubled times, something suddenly happens that nobody could have imagined. On September 11th 2001, Al Qaeda commits large scale terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Two commercial airliners are flown into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York, a third plane was crashed into the Pentagon near Washington D.C. and an attempt to crash a fourth airplane into the White House crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after passengers fought back while being kept hostage. 'Nine Eleven' shocked the entire world and also lefts its footprints in the Netherlands. It influenced the stock markets and the global economy, but also the relations between countries and communities.

There were rays of hope. Relations with the local partners in Saudi Arabia remained intact and work progressed at its usual pace. In the Netherlands, the company 'Electriciteitswerken J.C. van der Lof B.V.' from Veghel was added to the group. This company revolved around low and medium voltage cables, street lighting, traffic control systems and communication networks.

In Syria a new project was expected to commence, and in the fourth quarter the deal was closed, after which work on the Aleppo-Palmyra Gas Pipeline Project could start. This project consisted of the construction of 240 kilometres of gas pipeline, while A.Hak was fully responsible for the design, engineering, procurement and construction.

A 240 kilometre gas pipeline is constructed in Syria from Aleppo to Palmyra.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
JANUARY 1ST
2002

GERMANY, ITALY, THE NETHERLANDS, GREECE, FRANCE, LUXEMBOURG, AUSTRIA, FINLAND, BELGIUM, PORTUGAL AND SPAIN ADOPT THE EURO AS THEIR SINGLE CURRENCY.

It is a beautiful project, yet not enough to forget about the setbacks in the global economy, mostly in the IT and energy industries. The Netherlands, traditionally a country where emotions do not run high, is dealt another blow that further deteriorated society's sentiment. On May 6th 2002, the popular yet controversial politician Pim Fortuyn is murdered. The county remained in shock for days, and the elections, held only nine days later, resulted in participation of Fortuyn's party LPF in the first government of Prime Minister Balkenende. Without their leader, the party and its Ministers were quick to start fighting amongst each other. A very unstable situation that did not reflect well on the economic climate.

The effects of these events also influenced A.Hak, and once again all budgets were to be carefully monitored. Fortunately, a big boost was achieved on November 1st 2002: the combination Tebodin/GTI/A. Hak was selected by the NAM for the LOP-contract. This abbreviation stands for 'Landelijke Onshore Projecten', or Domestic Onshore Projects, and comprised of the construction of gas treatment stations, compressor stations, modifications to installations and pipeline installations. Tebodin was responsible for the engineering, GTI for the overhead installations and A.Hak for the underground pipelines. The contract had a five year duration, with an option to be extended with two additional five year terms.

Meantime in Saudi Arabia, the border of the city of Hofuf is reached, in which the last five kilometres of the 130 kilometres trajectory is to be installed in the inner-city. While waiting for the green light there, work continues on a 16" bifurcation stretching eight kilometres to Abqaiq. A.Hak Industrial Services is preparing hydrostatic testing of the pipelines. By now, the large energy corporations are somewhat done merging, proof of which is an assignment awarded by NUON for a hot water transport pipeline for the district heating network in Arnhem. Just as in Hofuf, this pipeline is to be constructed through the city-centre. It is a complex trajectory through narrow streets, often bumping into the existing underground infrastructure and an old sewage system. Region West constructs various 50 and 150 kV connections within its own territory, another NUON assignment. In the city of Tilburg, Essent Netwerk Brabant/Limburg, another large energy corporation, awards a project to work on the existing district heating network that was originally constructed by A.Hak in the distant past. The client insisted that its 5,500 clients connected to this network, would not go without heating for more than one day.

This 24" pipeline is constructed in France for GRTgaz Normandy.

Numerous exchanges between subcontractors, vendors, welders from the Tricht headquarters and pipefitters from the regions South and Rijnmond managed to accomplish this result. The year ends with a successful commissioning of the replacement of the gas pipeline from Kollumerpomp to Grijpskerk in Frisia, and all the way in the other end of the country, with a gas pipeline for Gasunie from Schinnen to Bocholtz.

WORLD HISTORY
MARCH 20TH
2003

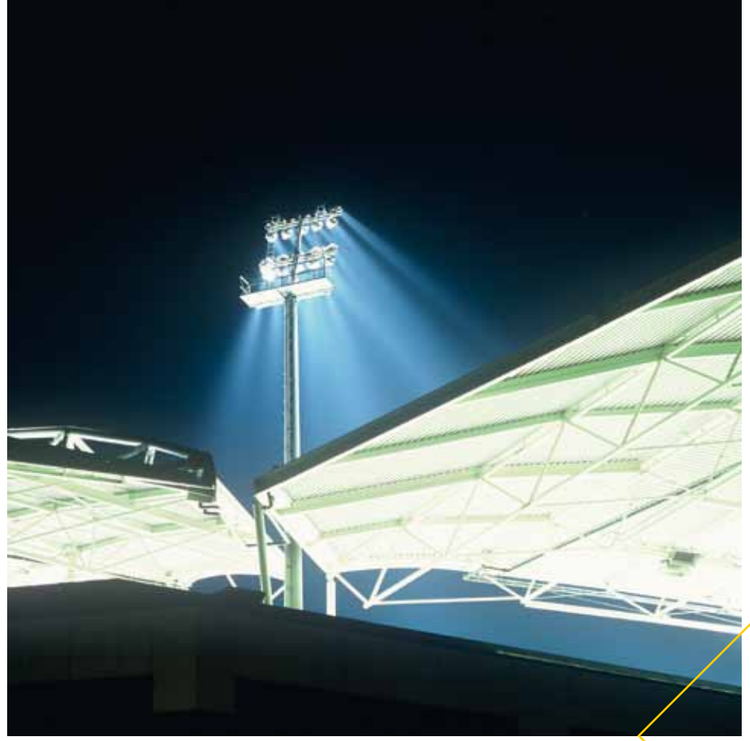
START OF THE IRAQ WAR.

Early in 2003, the Aleppo-Palmyra project in Syria is completed. Client Syrian Petroleum Company speaks out its compliments: this is the first project in its history to be completed entirely according to the planning and within the deadline. The LOP-contract that A.Hak won together with Tebodin and GTI with the NAM commences in February of that year. It is expected to bring in annual revenues that add up to somewhere between 20 to 40 million euros.

Large pipeline projects are awarded in the Southern provinces of Noord-Brabant and Limburg. 16 kilometres of pipeline for the transport of natural gas is constructed from Ravenstein to Vinkel, including fourteen drillings. Constructing a submersed pipeline through the Hertogswetering, the expansion of the Ravenstein compressor station and block valve location Vinkel. To facilitate the construction of the A73 highway near Swalmen, a small 2.1 kilometre segment of this trajectory is worked on with two HDD's, three railroad crossings, four future railroad crossing and fourteen road crossings.

The summer of 2003 is one of the hottest recorded in Dutch history. The water levels in the Rhine near Lobith are now 9.5 metres lower than during the 1995 evacuation. With a new brochure and a renewed website, A.Hak also introduces a new legal structure in which the name A.Hak Nederland disappears. A.Hak will consist of five autonomous, market-oriented divisions: A.Hak Infranet, specialised in cables and pipelines with a nationwide coverage; A.Hak Industrial Services, with a strong international focus in the field of maintaining, cleaning, drying and pipeline services; A.Hak International, a globally active division focusing on pipeline construction and landings; A.Hak

The Ravenstein – Vinkel trajectory.



Wherever A.Hak Leidingbouw goes, the company always wants to play in the top division of pipeline constructors. Here, A.Hak Infranet is also part of this top division, as they install the stadium lighting for top league soccer club FC Utrecht.

Industrie, the best alternative for new constructions, maintenance and inspection for industrials and of course A.Hak Leidingbouw, 'champion in the top division for Dutch pipe layers'. Hovering over these divisions, each of which has its own director, is the A.Hak Beheer (Management) holding. The task of the CEO of this holding is to watch over the development of the entire company, ensuring maximum cooperation between the divisions and creating new business opportunities. Rob Groenendijk takes up this responsibility.

WORLD HISTORY
MARCH 11TH
2004
AL QAEDA TERRORIST ATTACKS
ON FOUR MADRID TRAINS.

The new division structure creates more clarity, both internally as externally. With heads held up high and 'lean and mean', A.Hak steps into the year 2004. And that proved to be a necessity, because volumes might have slightly increased, the market prices remain very low. Nevertheless there is good news to be reported. A.Hak Infranet has won a contract from KPN Mobile in the UMTS discipline. After an intense tender process, A.Hak Leidingbouw wins the contract for the construction of 21 kilometres of gas pipeline for a new client, the Belgian Fluxys. Work is also carried out for Essent, in a field of expertise in which A.Hak was never contracted before by this client: the construction of a high pressure gas pipeline between Enschede and the German gas storage facility Gronau-Epe.

A.Hak Apparatenbouw (the former ACB) in Born, that has slipped under these tough circumstances, is rebooted in 2004, kept outside of the division structure for now, under a name by which it is still known today: Mechanical Contracting Limburg (MCL).

A.Hak Infranet reacts to the continuing price pressure by working from three regions. The telecom activities are shifted to A.Hak Telecom BV. A.Hak Industrie's maintenance activities are sold to Imtech. The market looks different for the divisions A.Hak Leidingbouw and A.Hak International. Here, demand is substantially increasing, an effect that is rewarding in 2006. A.Hak Leidingbouw participates in Frycap, a cooperation with Nacap, Visser & Smit Hanab and Denys, to construct a gas transport pipeline between Grijpskerk and Workum. This 83 kilometre 48" gas pipeline is the first one of its size to be constructed in the Netherlands in a long time.

Good news also arrives from Saudi Arabia. An order that was within arm's reach for a long time, finally came through. Together with local partner Al Rashid, A.Hak International starts working on a pipeline system of over 350 kilometres in length, with diameters varying between 40" and 80" and mostly running through desert ground, supplying millions of people with drinking water.

After numerous worrisome years, it is time to get back to work for A.Hak. For Rob Groenendijk, the moment has come to bid the company farewell. In his last preamble in the Hakblad magazine, he thanks everybody and emphasises that it is the joint effort that helped A.Hak get through the tough times.

A.Hak Leidingbouw participates in the Frycap joint venture created for Gasunie. Here, work is carried out on a gas transport pipeline between Grijpskerk and Workum.

‘Continue to work on innovative solutions’

NAME
Johan Robbe

POSITION
Director at A.Hak Industrial Services

The foundations for the current A.Hak industrial Services originate in the eighties when Union Carbide’s European nitrogen services are acquired. ‘Since then we grew out to become an internationally operating company with four main areas of expertise, locations in 15 countries and a staff of over 300’, said the 51 year old Director Johan Robbe of A.Hak Industrial Services.

Robbe has led A.Hak Industrial Services, undoubtedly the most internationally oriented A.Hak company, since the year 2000. After completing technical college, followed by an academic Business Administration study, he started working for the firm in 1985. Soon after, when Union Carbide’s European nitrogen services were acquired, the firm Seatec was also incorporated. They focused on pipeline inspections with cameras. ‘It led to hiring a former Shell R&D Manager who supported us in developing an ‘intelligent pig’. This innovative piece of machinery allows us to inspect the most complex pipelines out there, with turns and bends, for up to twenty kilometres’, Robbe states.

ONLINE TANK INSPECTIONS

In 2010, A.Hak Industrial Services also entered the field of online tank inspections. ‘As a result, we are now able to offer a full service portfolio to our industrial clients; from industrial services and pipeline services to inspection services. After all, a considerable part of the oil companies’ assets are invested in tank depots. Our innovative approach saves them a lot of money’, Robbe clarifies. ‘One of our inventions is an acoustic measuring tool that maps the amount of sludge (residual material of crude oil) on the bottom of a tank. And we also developed a process to remove this sludge from the tank in a way that is safe for people and the environment, without even having to clear the tank. After that, our patented robot performs an online inspection of the tank floor.’

GLOBAL INTEREST

Robbe emphasises that the innovative methods used by A.Hak Industrial Services are gaining attention from all over the world. ‘That also applies to oil companies who are increasing investments to retrieve complex extractable oil. Companies in the Gulf of Mexico drill down to depths of 2,000 to 3,000 metres to extract oil which is then brought to the surface through pipelines. As oil spills are of course devastating on numerous aspects, thorough inspections are mission-critical. The enormous water pressure on these depths results into various R&D challenges. That’s why we are continuously working with our partners to find new innovative solutions that enable oil production at these depths.’

‘Track record in the field of innovation’

‘The culture within a family company such as A.Hak cannot be compared to a company listed on a stock exchange. Both the Board as the staff are much more involved. Our collective focus and fast decision making set us apart in the industry’, said the Director of A.Hak Telecom, Fons van het Reve.

NAME
Fons van het Reve

POSITION
Director at A.Hak Telecom

A.Hak Telecom provides every possible solution for quick and smooth data and telecom traffic. Its 120 employees, operating from their Zwolle headquarters and various branch offices, install copper, CAI and fibreglass networks throughout the Netherlands. The company is also specialised in managing and maintaining these networks and also does this internationally in Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Romania and Jamaica. The high tech input that A.Hak Telecom offers, is also of great value for other A.Hak companies. ‘Together with Kaal Masten and partner DySI, we developed the innovative All-in-View camera system. This revolutionary concept combines intelligent video-data management with a camera that covers a 360 degree area’, Van het Reve explained about this recent innovation.

INDUSTRY LEADING CLIENTS

A.Hak Telecom also developed a next generation of the InfraView system, allowing for even faster and more efficient engineering and installation of fibreglass cables. The company also offers engineering, installation and management services for Wi-Fi hotspots. And, at the LOFAR telescope in Province of Drenthe, A.Hak Telecom was responsible for the construction and placement of the low frequency antennas and a fibreglass network. Satellite internet systems are now also part of the innovative A.Hak Telecom portfolio.

‘We indeed have a pretty extensive track record when it comes to innovations’, Van het Reve says. ‘This also resulted in being granted a challenging telematics project by Schiphol International Airport. Not only will we construct a fibreglass network, we are also responsible for solving any network disruptions as quickly as possible. And, we now also entered into a contract with air traffic control. Suffice it to say, we take great pride in working for these industry leaders.’

TIME FOR A COMEBACK

A new era of growth

Back under trusted leadership, A.Hak once again finds the route towards growth in 2007. It is the start of an era in which A.Hak offers fully integrated solutions to the five focus industries: Oil, Gas & Chemical, Water, Communication, Electricity & Lighting and Renewable Energy.

‘Keep moving on where others would stop’, the expression concluding the previous chapter, is fully applicable to the CEO taking charge of the firm in 2007. We need not be more enigmatic, as a book like this simply does not have a thrilling climax: the closer we get to the present, the more the reader knows. Willem van Geenhuizen could not resist the temptation and made a comeback as CEO. He directly made his presence felt in the renewed Haktueel magazine. His goal – and thus that of the organisation – was and is to ‘step into the shoes of our clients’ and ensure they would be unburdened as much as possible.
After various difficult years in which it was a necessity to focus on the internal organisation, Van Geenhuizen now went for full transparency. The corporate magazine aimed at business relations was a perfect example of that: simply show clients how we work. And through these open doors they went, out to find new assignments, a quest in which he led the way. For that matter, not much had changed since he stepped down in the nineties. Indeed, there were quite some similarities with the Willem van Geenhuizen who was interviewed by the Economisch Dagblad (Financial Times) in 1982. In this extensive article, an image was voiced of a company director that determined the entire world was the working ground for the firm. ‘Throughout the last few weeks, he travelled to Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Thailand. Out to find new assignments’ so read the intro. And in 2007, history repeated itself. Although Brazil and Thailand were not on the agenda, Saudi Arabia certainly was. After all, an ongoing project took place there in which a water pipeline infrastructure was to transport water through the desert, from the Red Sea to Jeddah, Mecca and Ta’if. It was the largest project A.Hak had ever scored up to then.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
JANUARY 1ST
2007

BULGARIA AND ROMANIA ACCEDE TO THE EUROPEAN UNION, SLOVENIA ADOPTS THE EURO.

Water through the desert of Saudi Arabia: still the biggest assignment ever awarded to A.Hak.

INTERVIEW
LUIS VELOSO EXPERT INSULATOR

‘Countless opportunities to develop yourself’

‘A.Hak offers its staff every opportunity to maximally develop themselves. I’ve been able to attend various courses over the past few years, which made me a real specialist in the field of insulation’, the 53 year old Luis Veloso, whose roots lie in Portugal, starts telling.

‘Ever since 2007 I visit Denmark at least once or twice a year. It’s home to one of our main raw materials suppliers and I support them with technical challenges on a regular basis. Our colleagues and kindred competitors are always welcome to ask me and my team everything they want to know about insulation. Over the past few years I mainly worked on district heating insulation projects, but also on projects for the Oil & Gas industry. The steel tubes are insulated in the factory and our team adds the finishing to the weld joints. The great thing about working with A.Hak is that the staff has a lot of personal liberty and gets a lot of opportunities to attend additional courses and training. We also managed to create a team with people who are both highly qualified and fun to work with, which greatly contributes to the pleasure we have in our daily work.’

Meanwhile, A.Hak also had a modest yet important role in an even bigger project, the construction of a 1,400 kilometres long 48” high pressure gas pipeline with 38 valve stations and 10 compressor booster stations. Reliance Industries had requested A.Hak to assist in managing the construction of the pipelines, a project in which European, Chinese, Russian and Indian constructors all worked together. It was the largest pipeline project India had ever seen, stretching from the country’s East to West coast. Led by Willem Zuidema, who did not only weigh in with his expertise in the pipeline expertise, but also with his vast experience in international projects, A.Hak contributed indispensably to various long drillings that were required to cross several rivers. And, to the surprise of those from other regions in the world, the specialists from this flat little country also proved to be very creative in transporting the pipelines across the steep slopes of the Himalaya Mountains.

A.Hak also works in the Himalaya.

Another high pressure pipeline, measuring 20" and 28 kilometres, was constructed in another rocky terrain in Greece. Italy was home to the construction of a 12 kilometres long gas pipeline. And in September 2007, A.Hak International won the project to fully refurbish a water distribution system in Vlore, Albania. However, due to complications in the financing of this last project, partially financed by development aid, it would take until June 2008 before work could actually start.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

2007

RENEWED OIL PRODUCTION
IN SCHOONEBEEK.

Back in the Netherlands, some changes also took place within A.Hak Infranet. A.Hak Rijnmond was formed by merging the heavily downsized A.Hak Industrie and the infra projects in the Rotterdam Rijnmond area. The various fields of expertise, including utility work (A.Hak Noord-Oost), thermal engineering (West) and cable technology (South) were now managed from their own regional offices, so that clients knew exactly who to call for their own specific assignments. Together, these companies offered full domestic and international coverage and service. A.Hak Noord-Oost for example, assisted in improving the water distribution system in Albania, while A.Hak Rijnmond was deployed in Saudi Arabia to create segment bends with a diameter of no less than 80". This approach also seemed to work in the Netherlands. In Amsterdam a project was carried out for the NUON power company in which heat transfer pipelines were constructed with a total trench length of approximately 7,200 metres. And Noord-Oost scored a new contract for three years of combined projects in the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe.

Heat transfer pipelines for NUON Warmte.

A.Hak Noord-Oost scores a combined work assignment.

A.Hak Telecom was fully geared up to start its work, as an independent company and preferred supplier for telecom provider KPN. As of January 1st 2008 it was being deployed for large scale fibreglass networks constructions, the so called 'glass transition' in the Netherlands. A.Hak Industrial Services also utilised new market opportunities by having its Inspection & Pipeline Services business unit organise master classes in pipeline inspection technology. Suddenly, the Tricht headquarters housed a class of students working with government, engineering bureaus and private sector clients. Those unaware of the niche expertise A.Hak had with HIS (short for Hak Industrial Services), certainly became aware of it now.

HIS organises master classes in pipeline inspection technology.

While people were being taught in Tricht, the same knowledge was brought to practical use in Nieuwegein for Rijkswaterstaat, as the fire main of the Princess Beatrix sluice was inspected. It was one of an average of eighty inspection jobs HIS completed annually. These jobs were not only carried out in the Netherlands alone, as projects were also completed in the same period in Abu Dhabi, Chili, Germany, Austria and Brazil. That last country was now also home to a new office, rapidly followed by another office in Houston, Texas, and another office in Romania in 2008. In the same year, HIS would split up into three business units: Industrial Services, mainly focusing on nitrogen related services from their Hoogeveen office, Pipeline Services that cleans, dries and tests pipelines, and Inspection Services, deployed to inspect pipelines.

A.Hak Leidingbouw was also on the verge of something big. Gasunie wanted to position the Netherlands as Europe's gas hub. Although new legislation now prescribed that every metre of pipeline was to be acquired through public tenders, looking at historic events and experience, the universe would unfold strangely if A.Hak would not be able to participate in these projects. For Gasunie, the phrase 'gas hub' is to be interpreted in more than one way. First of all, the Netherlands was to gain such an excellent gas infrastructure that it would function as a transport hub for the entire European mainland. This was to be achieved not only by expanding capacity of existing pipelines and creating new pipelines, but for example also by constructing LNG-terminals in the ports of Rotterdam and Eemshaven, allowing for the supply of liquid, compact gas that can be transferred into the transport system. At the same time, the capacity of gas storage in the Netherlands is to be expanded. In a different interpretation, the 'gas hub' also stands for the grand total of knowledge and experience held by Gasunie. And at its partners, at least that is what A.Hak likes to believe.

Before the new gas hub projects commence, A.Hak Leidingbouw is certainly not taking it easy. A new project is started in May 2007 for the Delta Energy Corporation for whom a 48" gas pipeline with a 55 kilometre length is constructed from Woensdrecht to Vlissingen. The 'Zeegas VOF' is responsible for the project, a joint venture between A.Hak Leidingbouw, Nacap and Visser & Smit Hanab.

Construction of a 55 kilometre 48" gas pipeline for Delta Energy.

A special, two-sided 1,300 meter drilling, right through the Lauwersmeer nature reserve.

Another successful joint operation was the LOP, short for Landelijke Onshore Projecten (Domestic Onshore Projects). After five years, client NAM prolongs the agreement for another two and a half years. LOP, now a partnership with equal project partners, opened its own office in Assen in 2007 with a terminal where KISS skids were being constructed. A KISS skid is a mobile gas installation with the same role as a regular skid: gas extraction, albeit considerably smarter and cheaper. Hence the name KISS came to exist, an abbreviation for 'Keep it Smart and Simple'. In 2008 LOP completes a landmark project by constructing 9 kilometres of gas pipeline from Lauwersoog to Anjum, right through the Lauwersmeer natural reserve and partially parallel to the Wadden Sea's primary seawall. For the construction of the segment being laid through this nature reserve, a unique, double-sided drilling with a 1,300 metres is carried out in which two individual drilling machines drill towards each other. A horizontal turn in the trajectory adds complexity, while the drills were also not allowed to emerge under the seawall. By deploying digital beacons, using magnetic fields to determine whether the drilling heads remained within the determined trajectory, this high-precision job was brought to a successful end.

Good news also came from Limburg, where MCL delivers four distillation columns to BP, the largest of which is over 10 metres high, while weighing in at 50 tons. And at the Chemelot Business Park, where A.Hak has its own offices, EdeA provides for an assignment to replace a pipeline used for fire extinguishing water. Re_spons, a construction consortium in which A.Hak owns a 50% share, also scores a great contract with a three and a half year duration for Gasunie, in which gas pipelines are constructed and rerouted, maintained, managed, inspected and modified

All-in all, 2008 proves to be quite a good year, something cautiously reaffirmed by the optimism expressed in the 'Parknieuws', which replaces the Hakblad magazine as the company magazine after 27 years. The title of Willem van Geenhuizen's preamble in this first edition of 2008 reads 'One bird'. Yes, 2007 was a satisfying year, indeed, the 2008 forecast looks even better, but the summer is still to come. And when that summer finally arrives, Van Geenhuizen straightforwardly concludes that demand indeed is growing. Priorities are the timely completion of projects and hiring new and qualified staff. When autumn comes, he launches a new slogan, 'Our World, Your Future', as the successor of the somewhat controversial 'No guts, no glory'.

Heavy haulage: MCL delivers four distillation columns to BP.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

2008

START OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS.

Despite of all this positive news, the end of 2008 puts a spanner in the works. '….suddenly the world seems to collapse', so writes Van Geenhuizen. 'Banks, perceived by many as impregnable fortresses led by serious and well-educated people, prove not to be impregnable at all and collapse or are bailed out by governments.' Have the good times already come to an end? Let's have a look back at the title of this article: Stay calm. '…the global demand for oil, gas, electricity, communications, water and basic commodities cannot change entirely within just six months.' A.Hak was not part of the 'group of gamblers who have entirely lost their ways'. By not engaging in these games, nor having done so in the past, and by continuing hard and diligent work, 2008 can come to a positive end. 'And the forecasts for 2009 are still promising, as many of our clients are parties who work with further horizons and focus on sustainable business models.'

Hence, there is no reason to panic, according to the CEO, but is he right? The market shows some opportunities on the horizon. Clients such as power and water corporations, local governments, Gasunie and the NAM indeed do not instantly terminate their budgets. 'Our world' might just continue to remain intact. Conline may even be a fortune-teller.

The Conline troops march ahead, coating precedes the actual construction work.

INTERVIEW
ARJAN VAN HOORN GREW UP WITH A.HAK

'Addicted to A.Hak since an early age'

'I literally grew up with A.Hak all around me. My father was a construction manager at the Hattem location and throughout my youth, he took me out to see various projects. Time certainly flies, as I've been working at the company myself for over twenty years now', says assistant company director Arjan van Hoorn from A.Hak Leidingbouw.

'People who work in the pipeline industry are a special kind of people. Sometimes it seems like they all have the same addiction. Roaming from one project to another, the mighty machinery, the mix between mechanical and civil engineering, it's just irresistible. As is the lack of a 9 to 5 state of mind, I think we really have a nomadic lifestyle.'

'Throughout the past few decades, A.Hak Leidingbouw has worked on some enormous projects. Gasunie's gas hub, on which our work is nearing completion, is a marvellous example of that. We do however notice that the amount of domestic 48" pipeline construction projects is decreasing, which is why we are shifting our growth focus towards the international market.'
'The acquisition of parts of former pipeline company Nacap is a great extension of our portfolio in that respect. I also strongly believe that the process of further integrating between A.Hak Leidingbouw, Industrie and International allows for even bigger international capabilities. A great future is ahead of us and I think it is amazing to be able to witness this from up close.

In December 2008, Gasunie has already ordered 420 kilometres of pipeline at various steel suppliers. Conline handles the storage, while also coating 220 kilometres of these, mostly 48", pipelines. These pipelines are required for one of the main arteries of the gas hub, a new North-South Route routed from the German Rysum to a new tunnel trajectory that is to be constructed under the River Ems passing Delfzijl and Scheemda to the pressure reducing station in Ommen. From there on, the route goes via Angerlo, Beuningen and Odiliapeel to Schinnen. The trajectory includes the construction of a new compressor station in Wijngaarden, to Zeelandic Flanders and a pipeline from the LNG-plant on the Maasvlakte to the Botlek. Although it is uncertain which party will be granted the project, the work is certainly out there.

Another park member that has no reason to complain is Rhenania in Nijmegen. Not only are dozens of kilometres of pipeline coated for various offshore clients located in the North Sea, projects are also carried out for clients outside of Europe's borders. Exports take place to Tunisia, Oman, Syria, Egypt, Pakistan and the Gulf of Mexico, while the 2009 forecast looks just as busy.

In 2008, the group achieved a 20% overall revenue increase roughly from € 250M to € 300M. The net profit even increased with 23% to € 18,6M. However, anybody expecting cheerful feedback on these achievements had to guess again. 'Now comes the time to maintain these results. Together we have to be careful not to become self-complacent and regard these successes as being normal.'

These cautious words of course do not relinquish the fact that great work is being delivered and scored. In Saudi Arabia, a pipeline is constructed through a 13 kilometre tunnel, as part of the Mecca to Ta'if water pipeline infrastructure. This tunnel is not a new venue, as A.Hak already installed another pipeline in it over thirty years ago, in the eighties. Now that a new pipeline is constructed, various partners are hired who can equip the tunnel with rails so that the pipeline can be driven and installed into the tunnel with a machine most resembling a train. Hardly surprising, this 'train' is specially built for this project. May 2009 is also the month in which a new contract is signed with the Saline Water Conversion Corporation. Together with partner Al-Rashid, A.Hak International will once again construct a 350 kilometre water pipeline with a maximum diameter of nearly two metres. A job providing for another three years of work.

The pipeline is transported through and installed in a tunnel with a custom train that was built especially for this project.

Early in 2009, A.Hak Leidingbouw also started its participation in the joint venture 'VOF Nedstream', working on the construction of a gas transport pipeline for Gasunie, one that even outshined the Frycap project in terms of length. This 48" pipeline, part of the North-South Route and measuring no less than 87 kilometres, stretches from the Northern town of Meeden to the more centrally located Ommen. In this joint venture, A.Hak was responsible for the creation of the longest part of the trajectory, the 55 most northern kilometres from Meeden to Hoogeveen. Ten brand-new side booms were commissioned during this project, while a noteworthy innovation was the application of automated welding, the first time this method was applied on a large scale for Gasunie.

2009 however, promised more than this pipeline alone. In the North, A.Hak Leidingbouw constructed the pipeline system for a yet to constructed compressor station. A job involving about 2,500 individual welds. The deal for the pipeline construction between the gas processing plant and a natural gas buffer in Zuidwending was also closed by A.Hak Leidingbouw. This buffer was constructed per request of a partnership between Akzo Nobel, Gasunie and NUON and was designed to absorb fluctuations in the demand for natural gas. This also meant that empty salt domes located there, now got a second life.

A CHANGING SOCIETY

2009

THE DUTCH RETIREMENT AGE IS SLOWLY INCREASED TO 67 YEARS.

Other parts of the firm also reported favourable developments. A.Hak Noord-Oost was busy with cable and pipeline projects for various clients such as the Provincial Museum in Assen, the gas and electricity company Electrabel (the former Rendo), Eelde Airport and the DPO, the pipeline organisation of the ministry of Defense.

At the Scheemda compressor station, equipped with pipelines by A.Hak Leidingbouw, Noord-Oost was hired to install all cables. With Twence, a large waste management company located in Twente, a design and construct contract was signed for the construction of underground district heating pipelines. This allowed for large amounts of residual heat from their plant being used to heat parts of the city of Enschede, thus achieving a considerable decrease in CO_2 emissions. In the North-Eastern Eemsmond region, A.Hak Noord-Oost installed a vast power distribution network that also amounts to a considerable CO_2 reduction.

Kaal Masten was proud to display its new truck for transporting masts and columns in both the domestic as international market. Another novelty was the development of light columns with a special reflection

Pipeline work for Electrabel.

Deurne.

Angerlo-Beuningen.

technology, purchased by the Deurne municipality and installed by A.Hak Zuid A. This division also received quite some attention, as it was investing in new equipment. A.Hak wanted to – and of course still wants to – be a company that provides complete and integrated solutions, with its own staff and its own equipment. While constructing pipelines and cables, drilling was virtually always part of the job. Therefore three drilling rigs were purchased, varying in tractive force from seven to a hundred tons. Not much later, this inventory was expanded with equipment for impact ramming deployable throughout the Netherlands. In the meantime, the drilling team from the Veghel location also immersed themselves in another new technique: the direct pipe method, purchasing a tunnel boring machine, used in that same year in a number of large closed front drillings on the Angerlo-Beuningen trajectory for Gasunie's North-South Route.

The hundred ton drilling rig was first deployed that summer in a project in the Frisian capital Leeuwarden. This project was made into a demonstration event, with delegates attending from key clients such as Vitens, Enexis, Liander, KPN, UPC, Priority and Ziggo. At the end of the year, Leeuwarden is also the location on which A.Hak Telecom starts a project in which 16,000 homes are connected to the fibreglass network. In the province of Drenthe, work also proceeded on the Dutch part of LOFAR, a radio telescope with a diameter of over 1,000 kilometres, based on thousands of interconnected sensors.

LOFAR in the Province of Drenthe.

A.Hak Drillcon wins the NSTT No Dig Award with the direct pipe drilling under the Hartel Channel.

A.Hak could reflect on a great 2009 in which all companies positively contributed to the combined results. Again, both revenue and profit showed sharp increases. For a family company, that means it's time for investments, so emphasises Van Geenhuizen. A.Hak Drillcon is one of those investment targets. In 2009, a large batch of machinery is purchased and as of January 1st 2010, a new specialist company is created which carries out drillings for both group companies as external partners and clients. The 30 staff members will be based in a new location in Helmond. And another premiere is knocking on the door: A.Hak Drillcon will carry out two drillings with the direct pipe method on the Angerlo-Beuningen trajectory, once again part of Gasunie's North-South Route. While conventional drilling methods require drilling a tunnel where, in a second phase, the pipeline is pulled into it, this new and advanced method directly assembles the drilling head onto the pipeline, after which the entire construction is pushed towards the destination at once using a Pipe Thruster. This means that a construction pit is only required on the entry side of the trajectory, while larger distances can be crossed. And, it's also faster than HDD or shield tunnelling, as both the drilling and laying the pipeline take place at the same time. The drillings in the Angerlo-Buningen trajectory are once again combined with an open house and great public interest. Upon using this method again in the summer, this time for a 540 metres drilling under the Hartel Channel, the N15 highway and the Betuweroute railway, the longest to date using this method, another public event is organised that once again showed high attendance numbers. Six months later, this project would be awarded with the NSTT No Dig Award.

POLITICAL EVENTS
FEBRUARY 20TH
2010

THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT, LED BY PRIME-MINISTER BALKENENDE, RESIGNS AMID QUARRELS ABOUT PROLONGING DUTCH PARTICIPATION IN THE NATO-MISSION IN UROZGAN, AFGHANISTAN.

Although the previous paragraph might indicate that this year was all about Drillcon, a lot more happened in 2010. Let's not forget about A.Hak Leidingbouw, who was the main constructor for all these great drilling projects. In addition to the Gasunie projects in the Europoort harbour and the aforementioned Angerlo-Beuningen trajectory, work also started on the Ommen-Esveld trajectory. Close to the village of Wijngaarden work proceeds on a new compressor station, while a nitrogen storage facility is built near Heiligerlee and two valve stations are constructed in the Province of Zeeland. The LOP contract with NAM is once again prolonged for another two and a half years. The pipeline constructors from the Belgian firm Fluxys seamlessly move on from one project to another and, towards the end of the year, also start working on a project on which this book will elaborate further on: the construction of a heat transfer pipeline from Diemen to Almere.

In the international projects, the projects in Saudi Arabia and Albania are almost completed, while the individual A.Hak Infranet companies are also kept busy. Noord-Oost continues its work for Twence and Essent and completes the underground infrastructure for a bungalow park in the German Winterberg and a neighbourhood in Wagenborg. The compressor station in Scheemda is equipped with no less than 230 kilometres of cables. The company replaced old water pipelines in the province of Drenthe, constructs a water pipeline in Slochteren for a newly built neighbourhood and replaced and rerouted a pressure sewage pipe in the northern town of Peize. For Enexis, Noord-Oost visits people in, or under, their homes to replace gas connections from the main pipeline up to their meter box. The claim that A.Hak Infranet is good in combining work is substantiated in a project in Leeuwarden. The reconstruction of the underground infrastructure of the Drachtsterplein square has no less than nine individual clients.

Reconstruction of the underground infrastructure at the Drachtsterplein square.

A somewhat less known expertise of A.Hak Infranet is the external illumination of historical buildings.

Meanwhile, A.Hak Zuid is floundering through the rock hard soil in Limburg. The staff is replacing a gas pipeline as well as a 1923 cast iron transport pipeline that is part of the water infrastructure. Challenges are not limited to working through hard limestone, as A.Hak Zuid also regularly bumps into old pipelines that were part of the old coal mines. As of May 1st, the contract with the province of Noord-Brabant for preventive and corrective maintenance on all electrotechnical installations is prolonged for three years. Two hockey pitches in the town De Meern are equipped with LED lighting.
A.Hak Rijnmond is also busy completing two new pump buildings in Scheveningen, an assignment for Dunea, a manufacturer and supplier of drinking water. For this project, a joint venture is founded with Ballast-Nedam. For another leading water producer, Evides, work is carried out on the water supply network in the Westland region. As the pipeline cannot be rinsed once it is in place, every segment is cleaned with chlorine under the strict supervision of the Bacteriology & Resources department. In Antwerp, Belgium, a 12" kerosene pipeline is installed for the Belgische Pijpleiding Organisatie (Belgian Pipeline Organisation).
While working on replacing a heat transfer pipeline from Diemen to Amsterdam, A.Hak West encountered so much changes during the project that it went on to become one of the most challenging assignments of the year. Distribution and home connections were to be replaced for the Purmerend Stadsverwarming (District heating), which also turned out not to be your everyday job. Not only did A.Hak had to prove itself in her role as preferred supplier in a European public tender, the project requirements also stipulated that people living in homes where work was completed or did not yet start, were not to experience any nuisance. Conline-Rhenania is also busy coating big and small pipelines for various clients from The Netherlands, Belgium and Algeria. The pipelines kept in storage by Conline for Gasunie are also delivered to the client. Kaal Masten innovates with the DCC-coating, a sustainable protective layer for steel masts that lasts much longer than conventional varnish. MCL utilises the potential of its own factor in Born by building a CO_2-capture system weighing 250 tons, transported across the road and water in five separate pieces to its definitive location in Buggenum.

A.Hak Rijnmond builds two new pump buildings for Dunea.

MCL constructs a 250 ton CO_2 capture system.

A.Hak Electron is expanded to become an all-round provider of overhead and underground high voltage connections.

During this year, the group is also further reinforced. A.Hak Telecom looks after Electel Group, a company from Tiel. The expertise of A.Hak Telecom is to provide for a full infrastructure, while Electel is a specialist in engineering and the technical aspects of (tele) communications. Adding their knowledge to that of the firm allows A.Hak Telecom to offer turn-key solutions, now not limited to copper or fibreglass cables, but also for complete networks for computers, communication or security. A.Hak Industrial Services (HIS) also expands its service portfolio. After acquiring Vichema, HIS is now able to offer chemical cleaning services for chemical and petrochemical installations. And another take-over takes place, this time in the U.S. HIS acquires Intank, a company specialised in cleaning large storage tanks. In Germany, Electron is purchased, a great extension of the activities in the field of cable technology. In the past, A.Hak only focused on the underground connections, the new A.Hak Electron however, is an all-round company for both underground as overhead high voltage connections with offices in both the Netherlands as Germany.
Lastly, the name Forteck Grondwatertechniek should certainly not be forgotten. It is a company that we now know by its historical name: Tjaden. Two of the Tjaden core activities are dewatering, where ground water levels are managed so that those working on constructing pipelines will keep their feet dry, and the construction of GHSP systems, ground source heat pump systems, able to heat or cool based on the constant temperature of ground water.

WORLD NEWS
DECEMBER 18TH
2010

MASSIVE PROTESTS BY THE PEOPLE OF TUNISIA AGAINST THEIR GOVERNMENT USHER IN THE ARAB SPRING.

GSHP, a form of sustainable energy, is a great match with A.Hak's 2010 certification on the highest level of the CSR Performance Ladder a Dutch independent CSR certification program. QHSE Manager Rob Vermeulen is to be accredited for this great result. A.Hak, which had maintained a longstanding image of a company of thinkers and doers, now adds two new alliterating phrases: careful and considerate. Although most readers now know that CSR is an abbreviation for Corporate Social Responsibility, it is worth mentioning that at the time. A.Hak was only the fifth company in the Netherlands to be awarded this certificate.

DNV

DET NORSKE VERITAS

MANAGEMENT SYSTEEM CERTIFICAAT

Certificaat Nr. 78310-2010-OTH-NLD

Dit is ter bevestiging dat

A. Hak Beheer BV

Steenoven 2-6, 4196 HG Tricht, Nederland
KvK nummer 11018154

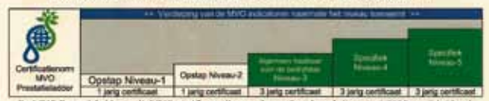
Het systeem voldoet aan de eisen gesteld in de norm:

MVO Prestatieladder Certificatienorm voor Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen versie juni 2010

Algemeen Haalbaar Niveau-3

Dit certificaat is geldig voor:

Ontwerp, aanleg en onderhoud voor kabel- en leidingsystemen



De MVO Prestatieladder en dit MVO certificaat zijn geregistreerd op de website www.MVOPrestatieladder.nl.

Datum van eerste uitgifte: 7 juli 2010

Dit certificaat is geldig tot: 7 juli 2013

De audit is uitgevoerd onder leiding van: M. van Alphen, *Lead Auditor*

Plaats en datum: Barendrecht, 7 juli 2010

namens de geaccrediteerde certificatie-instelling: DET NORSKE VERITAS CERTIFICATION B.V., NEDERLAND

A.G. Kerbusch, *Management Representative*

Het niet nakomen van de in de certificatie-overeenkomst gestelde condities kan leiden tot het ongeldig verklaren van dit certificaat.

Willem van Geenhuizen remains quite calm about these developments. “CSR, how far are you taking it?” I was asked this question several times throughout the past few years’, he writers in the March 2011 edition of Parknieuws. ‘And often this question was based on the entirely incorrect presumption that this would not be a priority for our companies. “Corporate Social Responsibility is in our DNA”, has always been my answer to this question. “Our companies and staff simply do not know another truth. Our approach to work, our attitude towards clients and stakeholders, our entire way of operation simply breaths corporate social responsibility”’. He continues to define the certification process as ‘complying with a lot of theoretical rules’. ‘Important rules nevertheless, but at the end of the day, it’s all about the way the firm operates on a day to day basis. How one perceives their colleagues and the environment. Whether you are willing to take somebody else’s interests into account, and most of all, how to integrate all of this in the client’s needs. CSR is the difference between doing your job without really looking forward or wanting to be a sympathetic partner that proactively thinks along in solving environmental problems while listening to the clients’ needs. And that has been our basic approach for almost fifty years.’

Ralf Koll, Gasunie (left), Ronald van Krieken, Director at A.Hak Drillcon (middle) and Willem van Geenhuizen raise their glasses to winning the No Dig Award.

The first quarter of 2011 earns A.Hak the aforementioned No Dig Award for A.Hak’s direct pipe drilling under the Hartel Channel. Not much later, it is announced that a new world record will be set in March. The longest direct pipe drilling up to that moment measured 570 metres, a record that would be crushed with an astonishing 1,400 metres in the Ommen-Esveld trajectory, part of Gasunie’s North-South Route. In retrospective, this can be reflected upon not only as flexing muscles in the announcement, but also as a successfully completed project. On January 1st, A.Hak Telecom enters into a service contract with Schiphol Telematics, A.Hak Rijnmond replaces cast-iron gas pipelines in The Hague with new ones made from shiny steel. And, in the centre of Amsterdam, A.Hak West replaces approximately 18,000 water metres; 5,000 of which are getting a new life in Surinam.

A.Hak Telecom working at Schiphol International Airport.

If 2011 was to be summarised under one common denominator, the title of the preamble of Parknieuws 2 would be the perfect match: Working together. And, if only one project was allowed as an example of that spirit, this choice would also be an easy one: the construction of an 8.4 kilometre heat transport pipeline from Diemen to Almere-Poort for Nuon Energy. No less than six individual group companies contributed to this project. In addition to main constructor A.Hak Leidingbouw, these companies were A.Hak Drillcon, A.Hak Telecom, A.Hak Industrial Services, Tjaden and MCL.
Those who have read this book up to here, might frown upon this project being selected as the ultimate example of Hak partnership. And of course there are many projects that are, especially based on a first impression, much more prestigious than just over 8 kilometres of heat transfer pipeline. However, there is more than the eye meets. First of all, have a look at the map of the Netherlands. Upon travelling from Diemen to Almere, one meets an obstacle: The IJ lake. The pipeline was therefore placed 1.5 metres under the bottom of the lake, something never done before with such a lengthy heat transfer pipeline. Equipment manufacturer MCL was hired for the engineering and construction of elements of the construction barge that would enable working from the water surface. A.Hak Telecom joined the project to simultaneously lay fibreglass cables. The pipeline itself was a steel-in-steel construction with a 20” inner tube and a 28” outer casing tube, interspersed with isolation material. A.Hak Industrial services was hired to dry the pipeline and vacuum the insulated space between the inner and outer tubes to ensure maximum insulation. A.Hak Drillcon carried out the drillings that started at the plant, went through the Diemer seawall, next through two sheet piling walls in the water to cross the ship canal and then through yet another sheet piling wall towards the opposing shore in the Almere-Poort neighbourhood. Tjaden carried out all dewatering tasks required for the drillings.

No less than six A.Hak companies work on constructing heat transfer pipelines between Diemen and Almere. The pipelines are installed at the bottom of the IJ Lake.

WORLD NEWS

MARCH 11TH 2011

A SEAQUAKE NEAR THE COAST OF JAPAN, HITTING A 9 ON THE RICHTER SCALE, LEADS TO A DEVASTATING TSUNAMI AND A NUCLEAR DISASTER.

The 2011 annual review reports extensively about this exceptional project. It does so in a new look-and-feel, as this annual review is the first edition of a brand new magazine for relations and staff, replacing the Haktueel and Parknieuws magazines. The report explains that 'Diemen-Almere' proves that A.Hak is indeed capable of providing turn-key solutions in which every aspect of the delivery chain is fulfilled. And this proof is not limited to this project alone, as A.Hak often provided A to Z services for Gasunie's gas hub project as well, a combined effort by A.Hak Leidingbouw, Infranet, Tjaden and HIS, but also with Conline-Rhenania that might not have coated every single pipeline, but did store and distribute all of them. The resources A.Hak has at its disposal are also regularly used. After a period of several years of slow paced industrial activities, they were brought back together under one name in 2011. MCL joined this development, as did the gas technology company H.J. Mertens which was acquired in April 2011. With locations in all corners of the country, A.Hak Industrie was able to offer nationwide coverage based on internal cooperation. Together with HIS, A.Hak Industrie entered into a contract with the NAM for internal and external inspections and adjustments to their underground pipeline infrastructure; a contract with a minimum duration of five years. A.Hak International got back to work in Iraq to contribute in the process wherein a country that had been ravaged by war, could return to the oil-exporting business. In Albania, the great business case also resulted into new projects being awarded in which, not much of a surprise, a combined effort was delivered by A.Hak Drillcon, Leidingbouw and HIS. Furthermore, A.Hak Drillcon travelled to Saudi Arabia to assist in the construction of a water supply network.

A.Hak International starts a new project in Iraq in 2011.

Every year, Alliander and A.Hak Infranet replace approximately 20,000 gas and power connections at homes in Amsterdam.

The ways in which day to day collaborations with clients come about, are also special. Client Alliander and A.Hak Infranet concluded that the best way to replace an annual 20,000 gas and power connections, is by working together as partners. A.Hak Telecom and the Sensor City Foundation also joined forces by turning Assen into a city full of sensors which can be used for virtually endless experiments for years to come. Together with Kaal Masten, a special intelligent column was developed that, as it is installed with diverse equipment, can be used for various purposes such as security and traffic flow management.
The only thing not working great in 2011 is the economy. Economic growth came to a grinding halt in the second quarter, and even turned into a retraction in the second semester of the year. A recession was born. A.Hak however did not have much reason to complain, although the margins were certainly under pressure and the net results slightly decreased as a result, revenue growth was still achieved which brought the group total well above 400 million euros.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
JANUARY 9TH
2012

THE NAM ANNOUNCES DISCOVERY OF THE METSLAWIER-ZUID GAS RESERVE, THE LARGEST ON-SHORE DISCOVERY SINCE 1995.

Now when exactly is a company 'done'? A group complete? Probably never. The economy does not cease to move and new opportunities will always arise. Such an opportunity does indeed present itself early in 2012 when the infranet company Plaisier is launched. Retaining its own name and its own identity, the company becomes part of A.Hak.

In 2012, Plaisier further reinforces the infranet companies in the Province of Noord-Holland.

That is not the case with former competitor Nacap. When this company is forced to cease its operations due to the economic crisis, A.Hak is able to offer a large amount of their staff a new job, while equipment and real estate from is also acquired from this former company. The new staff is placed with various group companies such as A.Hak International, A.Hak Leidingbouw and A.Hak Drillcon. As a result, A.Hak Drillcon can directly get to work in Colombia, where various assignments originating from Nacap are seamlessly continued.

In Germany, Reinhard Rohrbau is added to A.Hak. This company also takes possession of the assets and liabilities of a location of the German Nacap GMBH. Another relatively new member of the group, A.Hak Electron, seems to have integrated as part of the family rather quickly. Clients who place new orders with A.Hak for the construction of high and medium voltage cables, now experience a solid cooperation between Electron, A.Hak Drillcon, Infranet and Tjaden. The joint objective is to go full steam ahead and unburden clients. That also goes for the eastern part of the Netherlands, where various A.Hak locations support drinking water company Vitens in the construction of a new well field near Ypelo and a new water pipeline infrastructure at the production facility in Wierden. This projects demands for precision coordination between the local municipality, Rijkswaterstaat, Vitens, A.Hak Noord-Oost, A.Hak Zuid, providing the for power supply for the well field and A.Hak Drillcon that completes no less than 18 drillings with a total length of 3,900 metres.

The spring of 2012 seemed to revolve entirely around compressor stations. The construction of the new Wijngaarden station and the expansion of the existing Ravenstein station, were both fully completed. And in Saudi Arabia, the moment on which the people of Riyadh would have plenty of clean drinking water came close. Back in the Netherlands, MCL and A.Hak Industrie proved that their renewed cooperation led to great results. Two new distillation columns were partially refurbished and installed for client DSM, taking only half the time normally required for project completion. MCL took responsibility for the engineering, designing and construction, while A.Hak Industrie Born seamlessly followed their lead for the installation, albeit with some help from their colleagues in the Botlek area.

DSM is very satisfied with two partially refurbished distillation columns. MCL engineered, designed and built these columns, while A.Hak Industrie Born and Botlek connected them to the infrastructure.

INTERVIEW
KENNY VERMEULEN NEWEST HIRE

‘It’s not about what’s on your business card’

‘A.Hak really is a family company. It’s not about the job title or role you have, everybody works together to deliver the best solution to the client’, says 22 year old project administrator and junior planner Kenny Vermeulen of A.Hak Industrie. His enthusiasm might reveal that, when this book was written, he was the newest hire of A.Hak.

‘After completing high school I studied technical business management for two years, but then my father passed away and I took some time for myself. It caused me to get behind in my study to an extent that I couldn’t reasonably catch up. As my father, Rob Vermeulen, had worked for A.Hak over thirty years in various job roles and he always loved his job, I decided to send an email to the HR Department.’

‘The interview I got invited to resulted in a job as a project administrator and junior planner at A.Hak Industrie.’ A position in which Kenny just started when this interview took place. ‘I thought about sending that email to the HR Department for a long time, because I wanted to be sure about my choice. Now I know that is was the right call to make. People here are friendly towards one another. Of course there’s some kind of hierarchy, but it’s not about job roles and titles here. We all work together to find the best solutions for the customer, that surely resonates with me.’

Willem van Geenhuizen lays the cornerstone for the new office building for A.Hak Industrial Services.

WORLD NEWS

2012

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DECADES, FREE ELECTIONS ARE BEING HELD IN TUNISIA, EGYPT AND LIBYA, WHILE A CIVIL WAR RAGES THROUGH SYRIA.

A.Hak Telecom continues to maintain its image as a high tech partner. Ever since 2008, the company was involved in the construction of the LOFAR telescope, and this work is further expanded in 2012. The antennas for both the low and high frequencies are put in place by A.Hak Telecom with extreme precision, so that the Province of Drenthe can contribute to the quest for finding traces of the origin of the universe. HIS also announces successful results in the field of pipeline inspection from Japan, while looking forward to the completion of a new accommodation. In addition to a complete renovation of the existing office building, an entirely new building is constructed for HIS with plenty of space for offices, training and Research & Development. Furthermore, testing facilities are built and new warehouses are raised for both HIS as A.Hak Leidingbouw. The latter can also facilitate a great new welding school in this new accommodation. Underground, a new parking garage is constructed.

After the summer holidays, these new locations can be taken into use. Furthermore, 2012 is also the year in which HIS opens a branch office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2012 was also a year on which A.Hak Leidingbouw will proudly reflect on. The work on Gasunie's North-South Route gradually continues, together with A.Hak Drillcon this project now also crosses the River Meuse using the direct pipe method.

Crossing of the River Meuse.

A.Hak Leidingbouw also commences work for TAQA Energy in autumn, starting with the pipelines for what will become Western Europe's largest underground gas storage facility in Bergermeer. It accommodates the creation of gas reserves in the summer, when demand is low, which can be used in the winter, when demand is high.

INTERVIEW **JAN SYTSEMA** FIRST TESTER

'Safety awareness has increased incredibly'

'Back in the day we could be, so to speak, constructing pipelines while wearing clumps and short sleeves. Helmets and other personal safety equipment weren't used consistently. That certainly changed, the safety awareness has increased incredibly over the past few years', said Jan Sytsema who worked for A.Hak in various job roles since 1975, including as tester in various projects, both domestic and abroad.

'The mutual cooperation and camaraderie within the firm have always resonated with me. I've seen a lot of the world because of the large international presence of A.Hak. There was this time when I lived in a trailer in Tunisia, together with Arie Hak's son Kees. A bunch of guys wanted to upgrade a party by riding a donkey. Well, in the middle of the night they knocked on my door because they actually managed to get that poor donkey stuck in a trench. So Kees and I got out of bed to free the donkey with our Landrover.'

'I started working with the bending machine in 1975 while we were constructing a 48" pipeline between Assen and Ommen. Unfortunately, we did experience our fair share of accidents with machines like grinders, as covers and goggles weren't always worn as they were supposed to. That certainly changed throughout the past few years, safety awareness grew enormously.'

'Although I formally retired five years ago, I still get occasional phone calls to help out in a job. This allows me to remain involved with the firm. Although I'm 68 years old now, I still find it enjoyable and educational to share my experience with a younger generation.'

Early in October, the NAM renews the LOP contract. After an extensive tendering process, A.Hak Leidingbouw, Cofely and Tebodin are selected as project partners, working together in the newly founded company aQuaintance. This brand new company is responsible for the engineering, procurement and execution of all the work, so that the smaller gas reserves in the Northern Netherlands are operated as efficiently as possible and the larger gas field near Slochteren can remain untouched for the moment. aQuaintance wins this tender process, as it manages to offer even more reinforcement of NAM's core values than the LOP contract did: planning, cost control, quality and safety.

aQuaintance, a new joint venture between A.Hak, Cofely and Tebodin, takes over the role of the former LOP for all onshore tasks on the NAM pipeline constructions.

Safety is a value that has been long recognised by A.Hak. Yet insights may changes, as older pictures in this book depict some situations we would surely frown upon today. However, even the earliest editions of the Hakblad magazine turn safety into an active topic, both on the job as in one's private life. In June 1980, the holiday edition, the Hakblad magazine reports about swimming safely in open water. The next edition starts with, directly after the editorial note, the 'Safety at work' category, starting a tradition of priority on this topic that continues op to this very day. The summer edition of the 2012 magazine shows a clear schematic of how the group companies virtually completely comply with all the rules set forward in various safety certifications such as VCA and OHSAS 18001. Also noted in this publication is the fact that A.Hak International received an award in Iraq for its excellent contribution to the safety culture within the Iraq Crude Oil Export Expansion Project. And, nearing the end of its existence, the LOP receives a plaque from the NAM for achieving a marvellous milestone: completing 1,000,000 hours of work without serious incidents.

Now does this mean that one could wake up every single Hak staff member in the middle of the night, to have them recite all safety regulations by heart? The answer is no, and if we spend some time reading the preamble Willem van Geenhuizen wrote in the magazine's autumn edition, that by itself is certainly not the goal. 'More rules do not automatically lead to more safety', so he writes. 'Being aware of the priority of safety and operating in safe ways is to be part of the organisational culture and the DNA of our people. Safety policies are there to prevent human suffering whenever an incident does occur. If something happens, the first priority is the well-being of the people, rather than answering the question whether everybody abided by the rules.' That's the truth in all its glory, but still it is a reassuring thought that a few months before this article was written, a safety audit with a positive outcome ensured that the safety certifications were once again renewed.

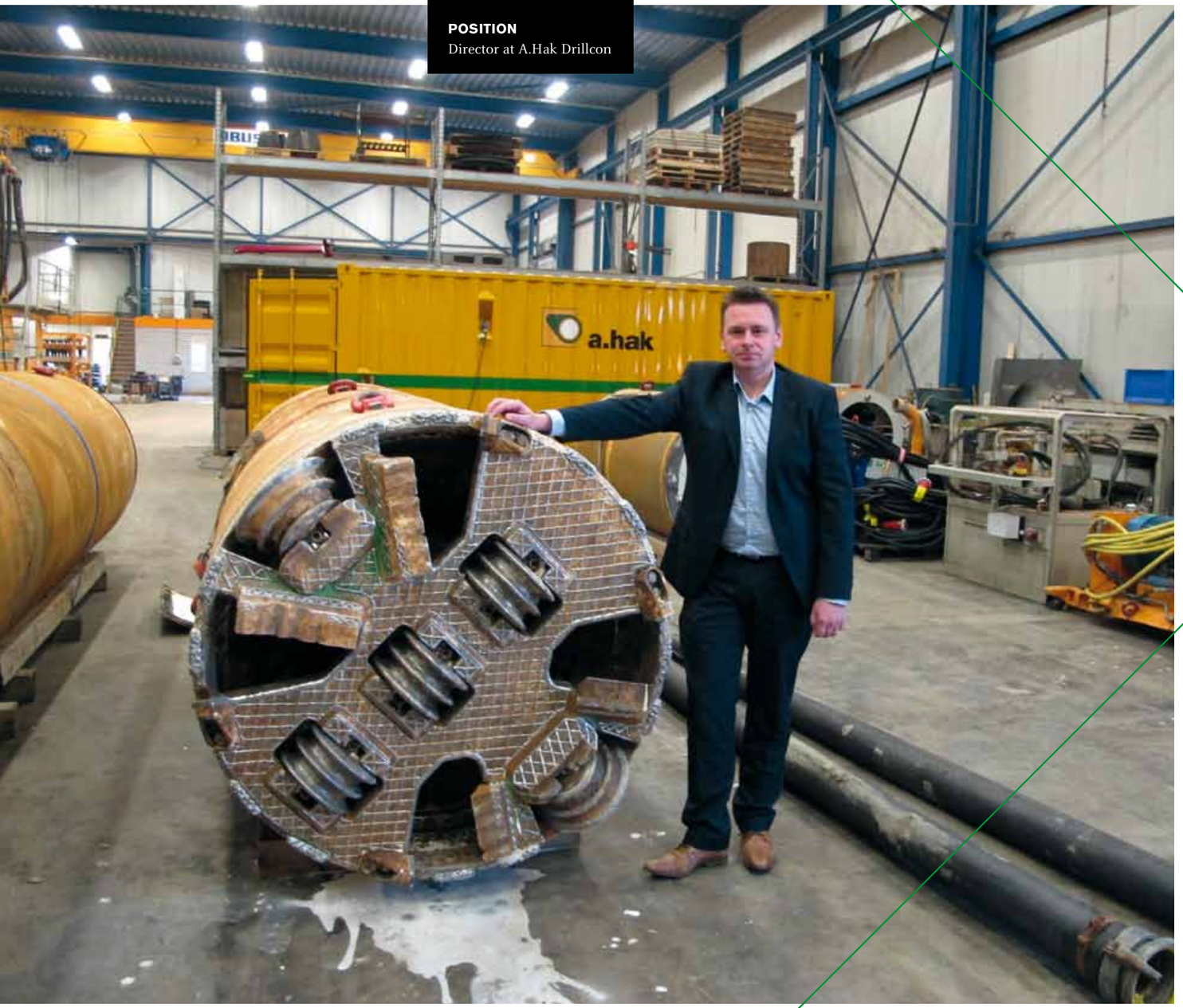
WORLD NEWS
DECEMBER 21ST
2012

DESPITE PERSISTENT RUMOURS ABOUT THE ALLEGED END OF THE WORLD PREDICTED BY THE END OF THE MAYA CALENDAR, THE WORLD DID NOT END.

Reading all this great news could almost let one forget that there still was a financial crisis looming out there. This reality could not be entirely ignored when the financial results of 2012 became clear at the end of the year. With respect to the fantastic 2011 year, A.Hak had to take a small step back in 2012. However, the 2011 revenue was almost matched and again crossed the € 400M threshold, with a solid profit of 4.3%. Great numbers for the time, especially when taking into account that very hefty investments were made in real estate, machines and installations.

NAME
Ronald van Krieken

POSITION
Director at A.Hak Drillcon



‘Continuous innovation is what makes us stand out’

‘Continuous innovation is what sets us apart from other drilling companies. We are currently teaming up with Shell to develop a new drilling system that, upon completion, puts drillings of three kilometres and more firmly on the horizon. No company in the world has done that before’, said 37 year old Ronald van Krieken, the director of A.Hak Drillcon.

A.Hak Drillcon is an industry leader in the field of design and deployment of all kinds of drillings for underground infrastructures. Over the past years we noticed a strong and growing international demand for the high-end expertise, accountable staff and state of the art equipment of our company. This includes a 500 ton rig that was purchased in June 2013. ‘Recently, for our client GHT France, we were the first company in the world to complete a direct pipe drilling of 1,072 metres under very difficult circumstances. Straight through layers of marl, clay, sand and stone’, said a proud Van Krieken who has led the division as its director since 2010.

NEW DRILLING SYSTEM

By combining existing HDD technology with the inversion of tubes, drillings with a length of three kilometres or more now appear on the horizon. Van Krieken foresees potential in this new drilling method. ‘Each year, cable and pipeline operators spend large amounts of money to cover the mainland infrastructure with soil and stones. Using this new drilling system, this cost component can be entirely eliminated. It’s also an interesting concept for countries such as Nigeria, because this technology allows oil pipelines to be placed deeper under the ground, which makes oil theft considerably more difficult.’

INTERNATIONAL

After completing various successful projects, one of which even meant drilling under a runway of Schiphol International Airport, A.Hak Drillcon is gradually expanding her international activities. ‘We recently completed a project in Colombia and became part of a new joint venture with a local contractor in Nigeria to carry out HDD projects for various oil and gas pipelines. A lot of potential clients from many different countries are highly interested in what we can do’, said Van Krieken.

NAME
Richard van Beers

POSITION
Director at A.Hak Electron

‘The growing energy demand means that the Netherlands will add another 400 kilometres of high-voltage connections to its infrastructure. In Germany this will be at least 4,000 kilometres. So the future looks pretty bright’, said 36 year old Richard van Beers, the Director of A.Hak Electron since November 2012.

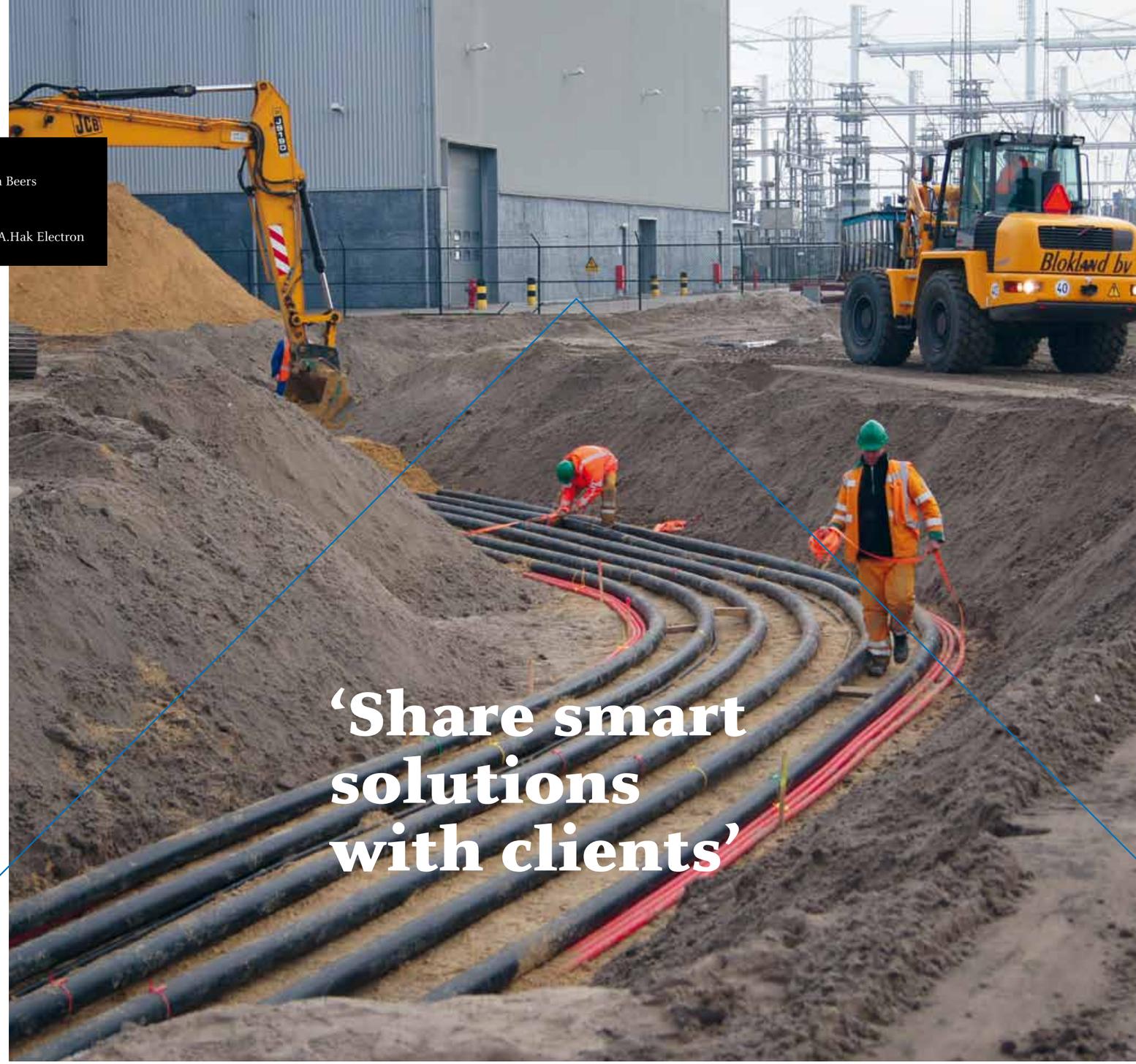
A.Hak Electron is a quickly growing, young enterprise consisting of 130 people located in the Netherlands and Germany. The company came to exist by merging the former A.Hak Kabeltechniek and the German Electron Hoch- und Mittelspannungstechnik after a 2010 take-over. ‘Since then, we became an all-round power infrastructure company for both overhead and underground high-voltage connections. From the first designs up to the engineering and maintenance tasks, clients can rely on A.Hak Electron for all their needs’, Van Beers shares.

INNOVATION

Innovation has always been a priority for A.Hak, and A.Hak Electron is no exception to that. ‘Recently we had three large cable drum rollers manufactured by MCL, each of which can carry a weight of up to a hundred tons. With this equipment, we meet the needs of our clients whose cable connections continue to increase in length. Another focus is getting to talk with our clients a few steps earlier in the process, so we can exchange best practices in an early stage’, the A.Hak Electron director tells. As the government has put a cap on the amount of overhead connections, A.Hak Electron profits both ways, Van Beers emphasises. ‘For every kilometre of overhead expansion, another kilometre must be constructed underground. And that translates into more orders for us.’

FAMILY COMPANY

The short communication lines, decisiveness and hefty investments in staff and equipment are what really underline the ‘family company’ nature of the firm for Van Beers. ‘Stop talking, get to work. If something must really get done, we’ll get it done within a day. Earned profits are mostly reinvested. At A.Hak Electron, we recently invested over two million euros in new equipment.’



‘Share smart solutions with clients’

‘A worldwide company based on a typical Dutch approach’

NAME
Hans de Paep

POSITION
Director at Tjaden

‘Our international activities keep expanding. After all, there is a lot of demand for the specific dewatering expertise that originates in the Netherlands. All the way to Qatar in the Middle East where construction works for the 2022 FIFA World Cup facilities are well underway’, said Hans de Paep, the 45 year old Director of Tjaden.

De Paep reflects on the early years of the typical Dutch company that became part of the A.Hak family in 2010. ‘Tjaden was founded over a century ago and constructed drinking water wells for farmers and horticulturists. The workers dug a big hole in the ground with a shovel and then sunk a number of concrete rings down in that hole. Quite different from the methods used by Tjaden today, in which state of the art drilling techniques are used to dewater trenches and construction pits.’ The company currently employs a staff of 72 that works at five Dutch branch offices, primarily delivering work to contractors in the civil engineering, infrastructure and installation industries, but also regularly completing projects directly for clients such as BASF and Total.

ULTRASONIC WELL CLEANING

Innovation is a top priority for A.Hak companies, and Tjaden is no exception to that. De Paep says, ‘Together with the University of Lithuania, we developed an environmentally friendly technology to clean water wells with ultrasonic sound waves. The actual innovation lies mostly in the ceramic elements we used. They only consume a fraction of the energy compared to the methods used in the past. Also, no chemicals are used whatsoever. We recently completed a highly successful pilot with drinking water company Brabant Water. This resulted into a great deal of attention from Dutch drinking water companies.’

THERMAL ENERGY STORAGE

After the recent acquisition of the AquaNed company in Oudenbosch, Tjaden was able to expand its portfolio with closed loop thermal energy storage systems. ‘That’s a great addition to the open loop systems we already had’, De Paep explains. ‘With these systems, we can use the constant temperature of ground water to cool in the summer and heat in the winter.’

ACROSS THE BORDER

The company is winning an increasing number of international projects. ‘We recently completed various dewatering projects in Belgium, France and Germany. Of course we also hope to win a few construction projects for the World Cup in Qatar, as our specific dewatering knowledge can surely be used there.’

NAME
Loe Steenbergen

POSITION
Manager
Equipment Services

‘Significant investments have prepared us for the future’

‘A.Hak has made significant investments in equipment over the past year. Purchases include a 500 ton HDD rig, ten Kubuta excavators, four crawler excavators, seven Caterpillars and a microtunneling machine. We’re ready for the future’, says the 51 year old Manager of the Equipment Services department, Loe Steenbergen.

‘I’ve been working in the machinery business ever since I was in high school. Leasing pipeline machinery was part of a previous job, where I learned about A.Hak. By then, I had been living out of a suitcase for long enough and when the opportunity presented itself, I started at the firm in 2004, Steenbergen recollects. ‘Equipment procurement is a shared responsibility between us and the individual companies. I also create the lease contracts.’

MORE SPACE

A lot has changed since Willem van Geenhuizen acquired three old stone factories in the towns Tricht, Herwijnen en Rhenen in the eighties. The stone factory in Tricht was transformed into a workshop. At the same time, a new office was built. ‘Recently, the office was completely renovated, and an extra wing was added. We also got an underground parking garage and the new warehouse is also completed’, Steenbergen explains the latest developments at the Tricht location.
The new warehouse, with a length of over 120 metres, accommodates facilities such as the construction workshop and the welding school. But more change is to come. ‘A.Hak Leidingbouw’s pipeline machinery and cranes will move to the northern Veendam location, while all Infra companies will house their equipment in Tricht. Considering all the recent investments, we can surely use the extra space’, according to Steenbergen.

WE HAVE WHAT IT TAKES

With his connections at all the A.Hak companies, Steenbergen is fully up-to-date about industry developments. ‘And that is why I look towards the future with confidence. There are a lot of pipeline projects ahead of us. Our brand-new equipment ensures that we have what it takes to complete these projects.’

COMPANIES
Plaisier
Reinhard Rohrbau

PART OF A.HAK SINCE 2012

‘We really became part of the family’

Reinhard Rohrbau and Plaisier became part of the A.Hak Group in 2012. Reinhard Rohrbau also acquired the assets and liabilities of the former Nacap GmbH in Meppen, Germany. These steps led to a company that provides energy transport and communication services to the German speaking countries in Western Europe. Plaisier is a longstanding champion in the combined construction of cables and pipelines for gas, water and energy in the Province of Noord-Holland.

Reinhard Rohrbau is an all-round organisation located in Meppen, a city located in Bundesland Niedersachsen (State of Lower Saxony), just east of the German border with the Netherlands. A branch office of the company is located in Raunheim, not far from Frankfurt am Main.

CORE BUSINESS

Reinhard Rohrbau primarily focuses on the construction of pipelines for gas, water, district heating and waste water, often combined with cable work for communication and other purposes. The company also builds installations such as compressor stations, gas dehydration systems, underground storage facilities, transfer stations and water purification systems. The day to day activities of this new A.Hakpark company start at planning and design and move all the way up to project execution and commissioning the systems. Reinhard Rohrbau delivers energy from the producer to the user and, based on its broad service portfolio in this discipline, provides flexible solutions that answer to the needs of its clients. Currently, the company employs approximately 100 staff members.

INDEPENDENT

Plaisier was founded by Piet Plaisier in 1979 and is, just as A.Hak, a real family company. Anneriet Hoogland took over the daily management of the company in 2013 from Piet’s widow, Annemiek Plaisier. ‘The first years as part of the A.Hak family have been a pleasure’, Anneriet explains. ‘Whenever Plaisier needs support, we can always rely on the various A.Hak companies. But at the same time, we have full liberty in deciding how we want to run this individual company. The A.Hak mentality is great and Plaisier really became part of the family.’

The autonomous approach in operations played an important part in 2012 when a contract was won for the Combi-Infra Noord-Holland. This joint venture between power, water, telecom and cable companies has operated over twenty years in the construction of new cables and pipelines. Its purpose is to minimise any nuisance for municipal governments, project developers and construction partners by constructing as many connections at the same time as possible.

CONTINUITY

Plaisier entered into the race for a new contract with the Combi-Infra Noord Holland together with A.Hak Infranet regio West. The northern part of the Province of Noord-Holland is divided into three parts, and contracts for these regions may not be awarded to a single constructor. ‘But as we submitted our tender for this project independently and acquired vast experience over the past two decades, the contract for a part of this area was once again awarded to us. The other part went to A.Hak Infranet region West, which means we are now well represented in the region’, said Hoogland. ‘The initial contract provides for five years of work, while it has an option to be extended with another three years. This results into important multi-annual continuity for our company. We are of course very happy with these developments.’

The successful year 2012 was followed by an even better 2013 which was the best financial year in the history of Plaisier.

NEXT STEP: A CENTURY

Together in a new role

This last chapter tells about the 2013 anniversary year. A year that was of course devoted to reflecting on the past, but also a year in which the first steps towards a new joint future were taken.

'Some readers might have spotted it immediately, others might not even have noticed, but this preamble was written by another writer than his predecessors. For our colleagues, especially those who attended our New Year's reception, this does not come as a surprise, while most of our partners also knew that a change was to come. As of January 1st, I took over the responsibility of being the CEO from my father. In this role I am supported by my sister Mariska, who now manages all supporting departments.' Sincerely, Marco van Geenhuizen. The title of this preamble in the magazine, of which the aforementioned paragraph is a quote, is the same as the title of this chapter: 'Together in a new role'.

'Together in a new role' can be explained in multiple ways. This already became clear during the traditional A.Hak New Year's reception, celebrating the start of the 2013 anniversary year. Two speeches were made, one by Willem and one by Marco van Geenhuizen, in which they both confirm and accept their new roles. It's a moment that is both emotional as down to earth, as was to be expected from this family company. Of course Willem is not planning on stepping back and having nothing to do with the company anymore, something his children, now starting their new role together, applaud. 'All those who know my father', Marco writes, 'will understand that his involvement with the firm will not diminish. In his new role, he will be our most important advisor, with an unabated commercial effort. And of course our companies can always rely on his vast knowledge and experience. Furthermore my father and mother will continue to be prominent faces on exhibitions and events.' They will however, throttle back considerably. For starters, Willem announces that he will no longer work on Mondays and Fridays. Looking back on 2013, at least for the part of working at the office, he managed to do this quite well.

Marco van Geenhuizen.

The final stretch of Gasunie's North-South Route makes for great pictures.

WORLD NEWS (IN HOLLAND)
JANUARY 28TH
2013

QUEEN BEATRIX ANNOUNCES
HER ABDICATION.

Now what exactly is going on with the recession and the economic crisis? Opinions differ on this topic, but the fact remains that 2013 is a year in which great new projects are not to be waited on for too long. In the first semester, the Limburg segment of the North-South Route is completed for Gasunie. MCL scores a framework agreement for the delivery of heat exchangers for gas receiving stations. Furthermore, early in 2013, A.Hak starts with a project that is to be regarded as the grand finale of the gas hub: the construction of a 48" gas transport pipeline from Beverwijk to Wijngaarden. As the main contractor on this project, A.Hak Leidingbouw manages to score 60 of the 90 kilometres of pipeline for this route. It is a project of extremes that contains pretty much every possible challenge a Dutch pipeline constructor may encounter.
Segments cross densely populated areas, while other parts even lack the basic infrastructure to deliver the equipment to the right location. There are segments with highly pressured ground water, often with a high salinity that may not rise to the surface, or segments with weak subsoil, complicating all work with heavy equipment. And of course the obstacles that are to be crossed are very different: railways and highways, maritime connections, an innumerable amount of ditches and of course the Polderbaan runway of Schiphol Airport. All in all, a project that requires skills gathered over the years in every field of pipeline construction, dewatering and drillings.

Conline-Rhenania also experienced an increased demand in the offshore industry, something that becomes obvious in 'concrete weight coating' projects, in which a concrete coating is affixed to steel pipelines. This technology does not only provide for protection, but also for extra ballast, so that the pipelines will stay submersed. HIS also certainly not remained unnoticed in this year, releasing new technologies for inspecting and cleaning oil tanks. Acoustic signals from the roof of the tank are used to create a 3D report and robots inspect tanks without having to go offline. The success of these methods also did not remain unnoticed: Shell requested HIS to participate in the development of a next generation of inspection robots as part of a Joint Industry Project. At the same time, the knowledge centre and the new testing facilities in and around the Tricht location are also working full speed ahead.

The new HIS testing facilities in Tricht.

Good news was also reported by A.Hak Electron, both from the overhead and the underground team. Electron's help was called for in Estonia during the construction of a 650 MW connection trajectory between Finland and Estonia with a length of 171 kilometres. For DELTA Infra, a new electric switchyard was connected to an existing station to accommodate the high voltage connection of Zeeland Refinery on their terrain. Furthermore TenneT TSO hired A.Hak Electron to create overhead connections, varying between 110 to 380 kV, across the entire nation. A.Hak Telecom supported Business Park Vijfsluizen, located in Schiedam, to achieve a national premiere with the innovative All-in-View camera system. The concept combines intelligent video-data management with a camera covering a 360 degrees area. A.Hak Telecom developed this system, including a multi-purpose column, cooperating with Kaal Masten to accomplish that part.

All-in-View, developed by A.Hak Telecom and Kaal Masten, is a next generation in camera surveillance systems.

ENVIRONMENT

2013

THE SUMMER OF 2013 WAS ONE OF THE HOTTEST SINCE 1903.

Pipeline construction as seen from above.

aQuaintance also contributes with the construction of a new gas pipeline that accommodates gas transport between the Norg underground storage facility in Langelo in the province of Drenthe and NAM's transfer station in Sappemeer in the province of Groningen. The new approach used by aQuaintance, resulting in A.Hak being involved on the engineering of projects much earlier, directly proves to be a right one. The project partners meet considerably less issues while planning is much more accurate. The increased focus on safety includes a special 'safety room', in which all staff receives an extensive safety briefing.

'Excel together in safety' is also the slogan of the Safety Excellence Cooperation (SEC). This cooperation between EdeA, A.Hak Industrie and five other 'residents' of the Chemelot Park in Limburg, was initiated by EdeA to ensure that safety is guaranteed on the highest possible level in all their activities. The colleagues of A.Hak Industry in the Botlek harbour area are being kept busy with various projects in the Port of Rotterdam, with BP being an important client. In the meantime new combined contracts are scored by A.Hak Infranet and Plaisier in the province of North-Holland.

Meanwhile, work in Iraq also continues. Early in 2013, A.Hak International completes the last tasks on two parallel oil pipelines for UNAOIL. These pipelines, measuring eight kilometres, enabled Iraq to transport its oil to the coast, after which tankers could transport it all across the globe. The project was quickly expanded with a second and third assignment, granted by respectively Shell and Weatherford, thus considerably prolonging A.Hak International's stay in Iraq. International also got in some great projects closer to home: building a compressor station in Germany and a 28" pipeline in Austria.

A.Hak Drillcon drills from the beach in Petten to a pontoon in the North Sea.

The anniversary year also brought various new expansions. A.Hak International opened a French location which is named A.Hak France. HIS made a strategic acquisition by adding Linde Nitrogen Services to its activities. Tjaden was reinforced with AquaNed from Oudenbosch. A.Hak Drillcon stepped into the African market by entering into a joint venture, named Nesthak, with constructor Nestoil.
The drilling team from Helmond also got yet another Dutch spotlight focused on them. Here, the cooling water discharge of the Petten nuclear power plant was relayed from the beach to a location one kilometre from the coastline. This was a highly complex drilling assignment from the beach to a barge in the sea, where the tube was brought to the surface using a jack-up rig. Not only were the landtasks secured to a level that the protected dune landscape would not suffer any damage, the beach remained open for hassle-free recreation throughout the entire summer. This was partially enabled by the fact that the product tube was transported from Norway to Petten with a tug boat as a solid one kilometre piece.

ANNIVERSARY NEWS

SEPTEMBER 14TH 2013

A.HAK CELEBRATES ITS 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY WITH 4,000 PEOPLE AT THE WALIBI AMUSEMENT PARK.

And then it arrived, September 14th, a day to which many people had been looking forward. The 50th anniversary was celebrated with the entire staff. The location for this event was easy to find, A.Hak had already celebrated large company parties with families in the Walibi Holland amusement park. This time not only active staff and their spouses and children were invited, but also all (early) retirees who were still connected to the firm. Although the weather unfortunately was rather cold and rainy, still over 4,000 guests attended, clearly recognisable with their anniversary hats depicting the very first logo of A.Hak Pijpleidingen. From every possible location in the Netherlands, and even Germany, colleagues showed up with their own cars or even with touring buses full of colleagues.
The courtyard of one of the rollercoasters served as the centre of operations and accommodated a tent for old colleagues and a stage on which Marco van Geenhuizen had the first opportunity in his short tenure as CEO to speak to address a vast amount of colleagues. With banners behind him that read texts such as '50 years wholeheartedly' and 'it's the staff that makes the firm', he thanked his parents for their large contribution in achieving this milestone. Statements that were affirmed by the applause of the gathered crowds. After concluding this official moment, the evening program started that culminated into a show by Dutch artist Jan Smit and a spectacular firework show.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6B
WALIBI

Enjoying the sight of a pipeline construction in a typical Dutch scenery. Most future pipeline constructions will take place in the international market.

As the roles of the Van Geenhuizen family members changes at the head of the firm, while still continuing together, so it is contemplated what the best roles are for the individual companies in the group. In the field of constructing large pipelines, focus will shift from the Netherlands to the international market. A.Hak International is fully prepared for this challenge. A.Hak Leidingbouw also possesses invaluable knowledge and experience in this field of expertise. Furthermore, A.Hak Industrie also employs a large amount of expertise in pipeline work, overhead and underground installations and all corresponding machinery. Plenty of reason, to increase cooperation between A.Hak International, A.Hak Leidingbouw and A.Hak Industrie. As a cluster, together in a new role.

The same goes for the companies who focus on networks for cables, distribution and communication. Also in this field we find diversities and similarities, as networks come in all kinds of sorts, shapes and purposes. A.Hak companies evolve around overhead and underground cables, electricity and water pipelines, lighting and communication, constructing networks and their innovative applications, even networks in which not a single cable is used. A.Hak is convinced that current and future clients are best served by offering turn-key solutions from our clustered knowledge and experience available at the combined infranet, telecom and cable companies.

The second cluster revolves around networks and distribution.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
NOVEMBER 14TH
2013

AFTER A LONG GLOBAL RECESSION, BOTH THE U.S. AND ASIAN ECONOMIES SEEM TO HAVE RECOVERED, WHILE EUROPE IS ALSO FINALLY GROWING AGAIN.

A third cluster is formed by the servicing and manufacturing companies, such as masts and columns manufacturer Kaal Masten. Conline-Rhenania, that coats pipelines of virtually any sort, material and diameter, or Tjaden, an expert in dewatering and ground water systems, and A.Hak Industrial Services, providing high-end and high-quality industrial services. These companies also share with one another that they can contribute to projects for the other two clusters, but also can work on projects for partners and even competitors. Take drilling company A.Hak Drillcon, that was hired in Colombia by an Italian client.

The manufacturing and supporting companies, including HIS, will increase their cooperation.

Together with a fourth cluster that will focus on innovations in the field of sustainable energy, A.Hak will confidently continue its road towards its centennial anniversary.

EPILOGUE

Upon reading this fascinating anniversary book, I came to realise time and time again, how privileged I am to have been able to experience so much in a single life time.

As a company, it took us fifty years to grow from a local player, to an industry leader in the field of designing and constructing complete overhead and underground networks for gas, water, oil, electricity and communications. With specialisms such as directed drillings, pipeline inspections, nitrogen related services, cleaning and inspecting large storage tanks, production of a large spectrum of masts and columns including intelligent street lighting and solar-powered lighting poles, dewatering and drilling all kinds of sources, including those used for geothermal heat pumps, and the manufacturing of high-end, industrial equipment for the oil, gas and (petro)chemical industry.

It all began with the relentless efforts of our founder, 'boss' Hak. Together with market expert and service guru Jan Algera, he created the basis for the success of this magnificent company. This success however, was also certainly enabled by you as our relation, or especially our colleague, with the support of your spouses or partners. For this, I want to express my warm appreciation and gratitude.

Many heights and depths were experienced together. Always motivated by new challenges, while new peaks were remotely visible on the horizon. To get there, we had to travel through some deep valleys, as the roads we chose were certainly not always the easy ones. But every time, we peaked a little bit higher.

And as a result, we can now call ourselves industry leaders, both domestic and abroad. Still we seek for new ways and roads. Our participation in initiatives of new and enthusiastic people and companies looking for methods and techniques for sustainable energy, might just lead to an even broader service portfolio for the A.Hak companies.

Together with my wife Gerda and our children Marco and Mariska, I thank you once again for all your efforts, which have been the reason we managed to achieve this milestone. Let us not grow too big for our boots, but rather continue working together towards even better and more complete service for our clients, so that everybody may take pride from our in now, but also in the future. I express the wish that we, together, happily and healthy, may proceed to an unknown, but undoubtedly promising future, in an exciting and challenging world.

WILLEM VAN GEENHUIZEN

50 years A.Hak giving it our all

is a special publication commemorating the 50th anniversary of A.Hak.

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