



100 YEARS OF MOVING FORWARD

THE HISTORY OF LV SHIPPING & TRANSPORT GROUP
1921-2021



INDEX

Colophon:

100 YEARS OF MOVING FORWARD
THE HISTORY OF
LV SHIPPING & TRANSPORT GROUP (1921-2021)

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GMC “tipper dumptrucks” from Lensveld on the ropewalk in Vlaardingen, circa 1946.

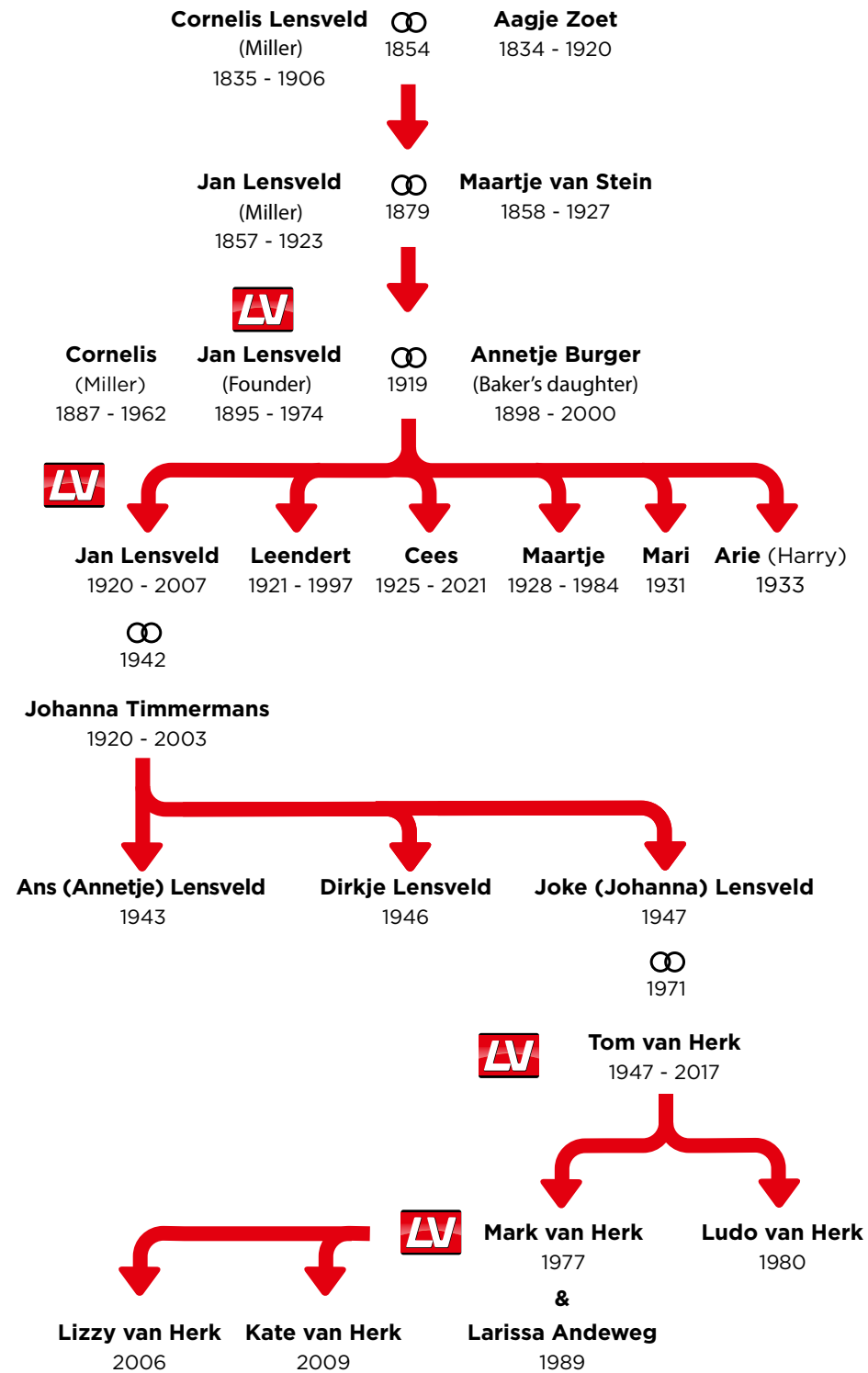
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PREFACE	11
PROLOGUE	13
THE RUN-UP 1900 - 1920	17
ESTABLISHMENT 1920 - 1930	23
CART WORK, FARM WORK AND FIRE 1930 - 1940	29
WARTIME TRANSPORT 1940 - 1945	35
RECOVERY 1945 - 1950	41
THE GOLDEN YEARS 1950 - 1970	47
FRESH BLOOD 1970 - 1980	59
OPPORTUNITIES OFF-SHORE 1980 - 1990	75
EXPANSION 1990 - 2010	93
A WORLDWIDE NETWORK WITH A LOCAL PRESENCE 2010 - 2020	121
100 YEARS OF MOVING FORWARD 2021	169
AFTERWORD	174
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	178

FAMILY TREE



PREFACE

It is exactly 100 years since miller's son Jan Lensveld Sr. registered his freight transport company Sleeperij J. Lensveld at the Chamber of Commerce in 1921. We look back to reflect on the company's developments through time. To consider the events, world-wide, national and local, that affected them. To place LV Shipping & Transport Group within a historical perspective and to do justice to all those whose personal contributions have helped shape LV into the company it is today: an international logistics service provider with a track record that we can all be proud of.

We would like to thank all employees worldwide who work for LV Shipping & Transport Group with utter dedication each day. They are indispensable to the success of our company. Together with them, we feel ready to face the future with confidence.

PROLOGUE



View of Oude Haven harbour, Vlaardingen, 1898.
Photo: Jac Niestadt, Vlaardingen City
Archives collection.

PROLOGUE

VLAARDINGEN, THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH HOLLAND, 1905

In the early morning, a horse-drawn cart carrying sacks of flour, clatters across the cobblestones of the Galgkade quay. The sound echoes across the nearby harbour, Spoorhaven. On the other side of the port, the steam locomotive sounds its whistle, signalling its departure from the station. Little Jan is sitting high up on the box seat beside his father, the miller Jan Lensveld. In his ten years, he has already made the trip to the various bakeries in the area many a time; he knows the route like the back of his hand. The Westhavenkade quay is already buzzing with activity. Hollandia wagons carry milk churns from the Delfste Veer ferry to the steam-powered dairy plant on the opposite end of the quay. The white steam bellows up into the pale blue morning sky.

The old harbour, or Oude Haven, is for the herring luggers. Fishermen in wooden clogs are rolling the barrels of herring that were gibbed at sea off the ship. Coffee boys walk to and fro, carrying jugs

of coffee and bags with sandwiches to the coopers on the quay. The men take the freshly-delivered salted herring and transfer them into new barrels. Jan knows that a herring or two occasionally slips



Map of Vlaardingen, 1902. From: Topographical Atlas. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.



Coopers on the quay in Vlaardingen, circa 1900. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

out as the barrels are sealed; when that happens, you had better be quick. But Jan isn't fond of herring. Cheers can be heard from the quay: "The ball is up, there's a ship in sight!" A ball is hoisted up from the church tower, meaning that a lugger has returned after weeks on the North Sea. Fishermen's wives rush down the pier, eager to catch sight of their husbands again. Father remains calm. With a steady hand, he guides the horse along the crowd, past the local fish market (De Visbank) to the north side of town.

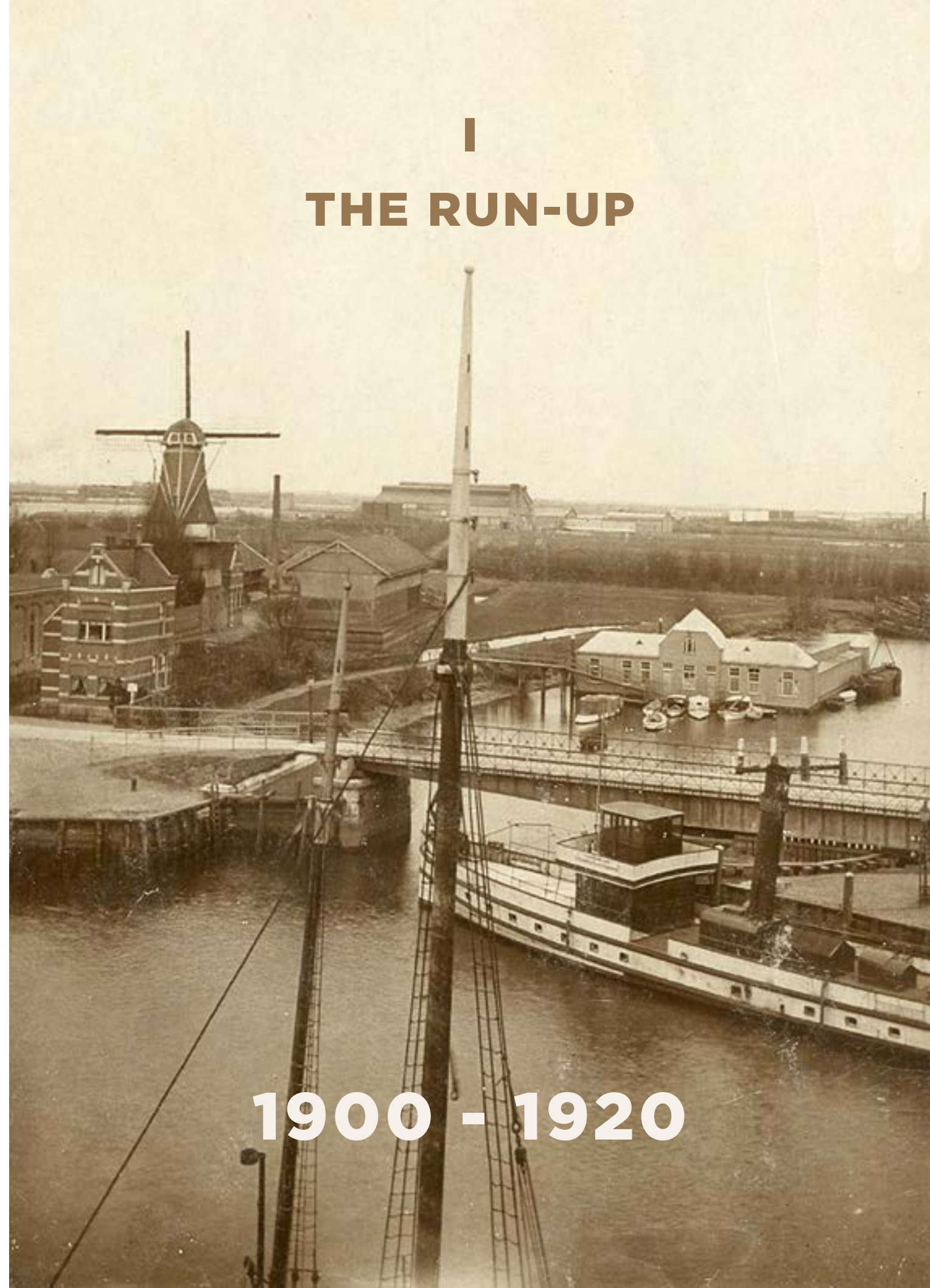
Jan is glad to see his father seems to be back to his old self. Last week, he took Jan and his older brother Cornelis to the annual horse market. With that, a year of calamity had seemed to finally have come to an end. On 13 June 1904, his little brother Marius had died at the age of five. Six weeks later, during a thunderstorm, lightning struck one of the steel rods of the flour mill, causing it to catch fire. Within minutes, the thatched roof had

been ablaze. Luckily, it had not been very windy and no one had been injured. But father had not been insured and had had to pay the crew 218 guilders in labour costs. The fire even made the newspapers. Even major ones, like *De Amersfoortsche*, had reported on it!

A BALL IS HOISTED UP FROM THE CHURCH TOWER

Father says it is not easy to be a miller in this day and age. Mr. Van Dusseldorf's steam-powered flour mill on the corner of the Galgkade quay stands 21 metres tall and has no fewer than ten pairs of mill stones. There, grain can be milled into flour all year round, with or without wind. That mill isn't run by a miller, but by an engine driver. The horse snorts at the bright morning sun. Jan adores horses. He does not yet know what he would like to be when he grows up, but he's sure he would be quite content living a farmer's life. "Whoa!" With a stern command, father brings the cart to a halt. There is work to be done.

I THE RUN-UP



1900 - 1920

Spoorhaven harbour, with windmill "De Vrijheid" to the left, circa 1900. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

THE RUN-UP

A CHANGING WORLD

In the past few centuries, water and wind had allowed Vlaardingen to grow into one of the major fishing ports in the region. As a ten-year-old boy, Jan Lensveld, founder of LV Shipping & Transport, witnessed the changes that came for the ‘herring capital’ on the Nieuwe Maas river in 1905.

Before 1850, almost the entire working population of Vlaardingen had been employed in the fisheries or related industries. Saltworks and cooperage houses, shipowners’, shipyards and ropewalks provided work for rope twisters and carpenters, net-menders, sail makers and shipwrights: professions we would hardly recognise nowadays. Warehouses and shipowners’ residences sprang up along the harbour fronts and, on the edge of the city, saw and hulling mills provided wood for the shipyards and flour for the production of ship’s biscuits.

All that changed when industrialisation reached Vlaardingen in the second half of the 19th century. The establishment of its connection to the railway in 1881, and construction of the Nieuwe Waterweg canal in 1872, connecting the city directly to the North Sea, boosted trade across both land and water, introducing a new, important source of income. Companies started to specialise in the import and shipping of spices from India, wine from

BY THE TIME JAN TURNED TEN, THE CITY OF VLAARDINGEN NO LONGER DEPENDED ON FISHING

Portugal and wood, sugar, coffee, hides, coal, tar and grain. Dutch gin (jenever), cheese and dried fish were exported to the neighbouring countries and beyond. New companies and factories popped up rapidly across the city. But industrialisation also came for companies associated with the traditional fishing trade. Between 1885 and 1905, the number of inhabitants of Vlaardingen doubled to over 21,000.

Lime kilns were built on the edge of the river to facilitate the expansion of housing. Also expanding was the number of new harbours and warehouses.

By the time Jan turned ten, the city of Vlaardingen no longer depended on fishing. It had become a modern town in development, where the streets are buzzing with activity and mechanical processes have taken over from the natural power of wind.



River map of Vlaardingen from 1906 with the mills on the Galgkade quay. Rijkswaterstaat collection.



Windmill “De Vrijheid”. Panel by F. van der Velden. Han en Ans van Elk-Lensveld’s private collection.

“DE VRIJHEID” WINDMILL

Jan Lensveld came from a family of millers. In 1882, his grandfather Cornelis Lensveld (1835) bought De Vrijheid (“Freedom”) windmill, including warehouse and yard on the Galgkade quay. It was located on the edge of town, where, up until the end of the 18th century, convicts were hanged. From the surrounding polder lands, one was once - on windy days - able see no fewer than 17 Vlaardingen windmills turning. But when Cornelis, at the age of 47, became the owner of De Vrijheid, a tall, octagonal smock mill, wind energy was already fighting a losing battle to

modern steam power. Of the four proud mills that had once adorned the Galgkade quay, only De Vrijheid remained at the time. At the time, the windmill served as a hulling and flour mill; ground grain was subsequently delivered to the bakers in the area for the production of bread and rusk.

Cornelis was barely 19 when he married 21-year-old Aagje Zoet in 1854. The marriage brought forth 15 children. Cornelis had his eldest son Jan, born in 1857, learn the trade of miller elsewhere. Jan started as a sack maker and graduated to miller’s man. When, in 1882, Cornelis became



Windmill “De Batavier” in Schiedam: the birthplace of Jan Lensveld Sr. (1895). Colourised photo: J. van Diggelen.



Panel from circa 1680 with the four windmills on the Galgkade quay. From left to right: "De Bonte Os" (The Dappled Ox) runmill, "De Vrijheid" (The Freedom) snuff and peeling mill, "De Roos" (The Rose) sawmill and "De Hoop" (The Hope) peeling mill. Regional Museum Jan Anderson collection.

owner of De Vrijheid, Jan was 25 years old and had been married for three years to a Maartje van Stein. He was quite ready for the next step in his career. Cornelis instated Jan as miller of De Vrijheid.

The work of a miller was tough and full of risk. The hulling mill only worked at wind force 6, and the miller had to turn the cap (the smock) to the wind by hand, which frequently resulted in fatal accidents. The competition was fierce. In Vlaardingen, the nearby steam-powered flour mill, which sat like an oil tanker in the landscape, at times literally took the wind out of the traditional smock mill's sails. The mill itself was also quite vulnerable. Maintenance was expensive and, due to the wooden body and thatched roof, fire could have disastrous consequences. Towards the end of the 19th century, old-fashioned mills were put up for public sale by the dozen. They changed hands more often than the wind changed direction. At the beginning of the 20th century, many mills came to lie still and for most, demolition was ultimately inevitable.

During periods of no wind, Jan had no income. In order to support his family, he kept pigs in the yard behind the mill. In 1886, the opportunity came along for him to acquire his own malt mill, including residence, stables and hayloft. Jan and his family moved into the millers residence of De Batavier ('Batavian') windmill on the Boersvest lane in Schiedam where, on 23 December 1895, his second son, Jan Lensveld Jr. - the future founder of LV Shipping and Transport Group - was born. During his time as owner of De Batavier, Jan Sr. had to deal with a number of setbacks. The stone windmill was one of the highest in the Netherlands; in times of strong gales, parts of its fencing were occasionally hurled towards the city. In 1889, a fire broke out inside the mill, and on 4 March 1897, part of one of the sails was blown into the orphanage across the street by a strong south-westerly wind. But on the family front, Jan and Maartje also went through hard times. Of the twelve children they had together, only six reached adulthood.

In 1901, Jan and Maartje returned with their family to De Vrijheid in Vlaardingen. In the years to come, Jan would keep the mill running together with his two oldest sons, Cornelis Jr. and Jan Jr., who thus learned the trade from their father. After the passing of old Cornelis in 1906, the mill passed to his widow, Aagje. When she died in 1920, the mill went to her grand-

son, Cornelis Jr., Jan Jr.'s brother. In 1925, the by then badly neglected mill was demolished. Cornelis and Jan were two of the last remaining proper millers. It was the end of an era, but by this time, Jan Jr. had already traded in the life of a miller for his own company: Sleeperij J. Lensveld (J. Lensveld Freight Transport).

A wooden nameplate is all that remains of the "De Vrijheid" windmill.
Photo: C.M. Tholens, 1967.
Vlaardingen City Archives collection.



Windmill "De Vrijheid" not long before its demolition, circa 1920. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

II ESTABLISHMENT



1920 - 1930

A Lensveld cart, Hoflaan municipal works. Circa 1930.

ESTABLISHMENT

THE FREIGHT TRANSPORT COMPANY

When, at the age of 18, Jan Jr. was called up for military service in the 22nd infantry regiment at the end of 1914, his service record states his profession as ‘miller’ in elegant handwriting. Upon his return in 1916, times appeared to have changed. Vlaardingen was in dire need of hauliers. While the Great War tore through Europe, Jan started a freight transport company, with the help of his father, using the site of De Vrijheid mill and only a horse and cart.



Hoflaan municipal works, 1930. Standing Dirk van Everdinge and carter Kees Kattestaart on the trestle.

Nowadays, the word ‘freight’ is often associated with railroad transport, but freight can be – and was – used to denote any cargo, transported over land or sea. Jan used a barge wagon, or freight cart: a long, wooden wagon with small wheels well-suited for carrying heavy loads. The first motorised lorry had been introduced by MAN in Germany, in 1915, but this was a luxury he would not be able to afford for the foreseeable future. Jan used his freight cart to transport barrels of herring from the luggers in Vlaardingen to the fish auction in Scheveningen, and potatoes and coal from arriving ships to various companies in the area.



Jan Lensveld and Annetje Burger.

In 1919, at the age of 24, Jan had married Annetje Burger, the spirited, sharp-witted daughter of a baker from Schiedam. Jan had met her on one of his trips to the bakeries in the area. It had been love at first sight. When, in 1920, Jan’s grandmother Aagje died and the mill passed to his eldest brother Cornelis, Annetje insisted that Jan register his business with the Chamber of Commerce. In 1921, a new law came into effect which allowed one-man businesses to be listed in the Commercial Register. Annetje would live to be 102 years old and would often tell the story of that one day on which she had hurried to Schiedam to ask her father for advice: “I ran on hare’s leather shoes across the dyke to Schiedam.” (A Dutch expression meaning ‘fast as a hare’.) It was a long way, over a small levee with

“I RAN ON HARE’S LEATHER SHOES ACROSS THE DYKE TO SCHIEDAM”



Schiedamsedijk levee, Vlaardingen. Regional Museum Jan Anderson collection.

a steep slope on either side. Anyone who wanted to cross, had to pay a toll, but she didn’t care.

Annetje Burger possessed excellent foresight. Milling was a dying profession and her brother-in-law Cornelis would soon have to give up De Vrijheid. It was of the utmost importance that the business be secured and transferred to her husband’s name. That same year, Jan registered with



The first and only advertisement the company ever placed, from the *Nieuwe Vlaardingsche Courant* newspaper of 4 February 1921: “Sleeperij J. Lensveld politely offers its services.”

the Chamber of Commerce. The history of LV Shipping & Transport Group had officially begun.

INDUSTRIALISATION

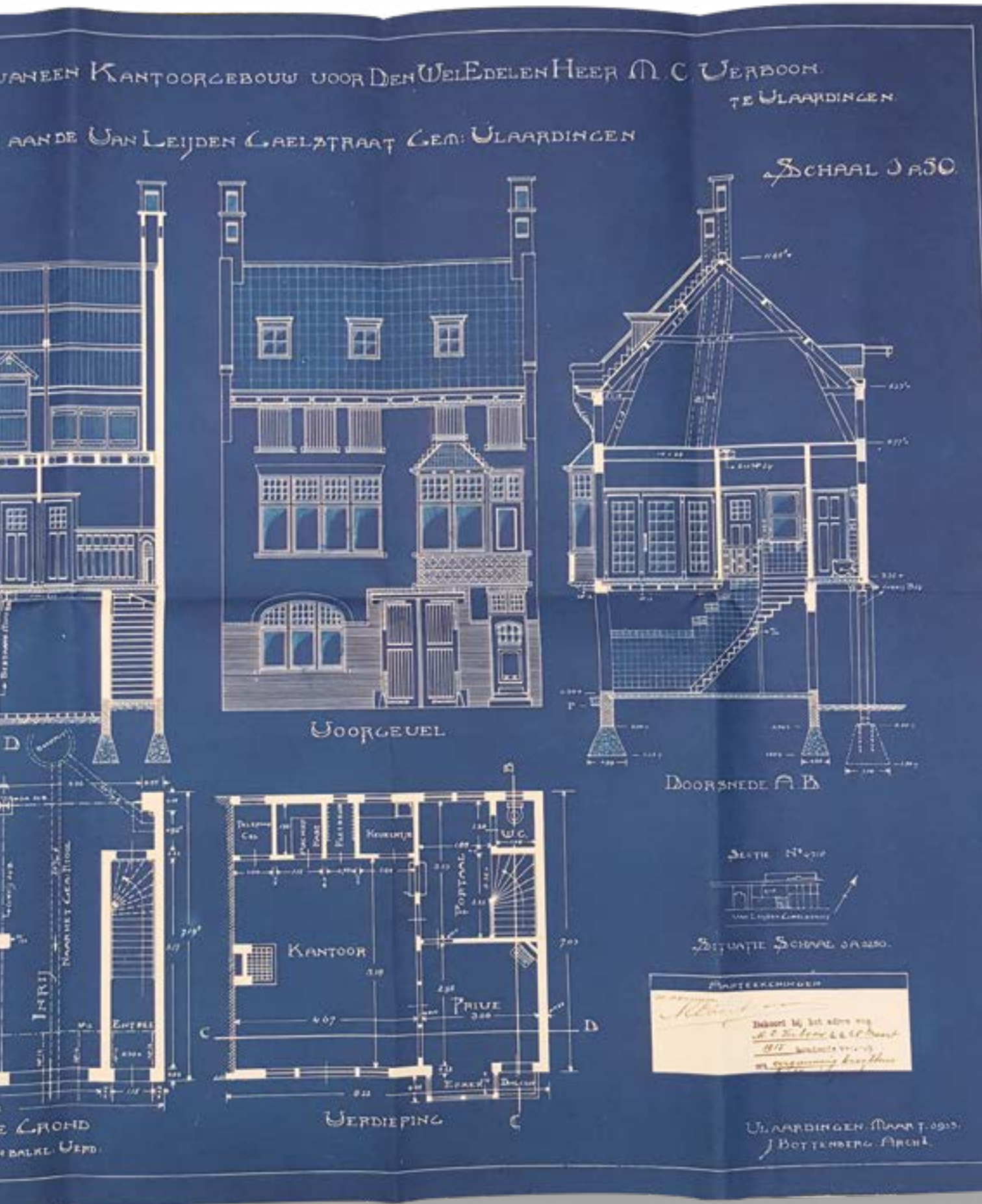
When Jan started off, the developments towards industrialisation were in full swing. Vlaardingen and the surrounding area saw the rise of establishments such

as Lever’s Soap Company, dairy plant Emaus, A. de Jong’s machine factory and the Port Authority East Vlaardingen. Between 1921 and 1923, the Vulcaanhaven harbour was constructed, from which ore was transhipped. There was a tremendous amount of work from the construction of roads and harbours, warehouses and factories, and housing for workers. Slowly but surely, the city started to spill into the polder land, where entire neighbourhoods sprung up. At Sleeperij J. Lensveld, business was booming.

There was so much work that there was hardly a need for Jan to advertise. A single advertisement from 1921 was to be found in the vast collection of digitised Dutch newspapers. In this ad, Jan Lensveld “politely offers” his services. To stable his horse and store his cart as well as large quantities of sand and stone, Jan rented a plot of land on the Kortedijksteeg alley. When, in March 1920, the rent agreement expired, he sent the municipal authorities a written request to extend the contract by three years, also requesting the price be reduced from 95 guilders to 50. For, despite his steady stream of revenue, Jan remained ever economically-minded. He received a reply stating that he may continue to rent the plot, but that the price would remain unchanged.

MOVE TO EERSTE VAN LEIJDEN GAELSTRAAT 39A

On 28 June 1920, Jan and Annetje welcomed their first child into the world, a son they call Jan Jr. One year later, on 10



Blueprint of the house at Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat 39a, 1915. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

November 1921, their second son Leendert (Leen) was born. Soon the miller's residence on the Galgkade quay, where both boys were born, became too small for their growing family. Jan had had his eye on a tall, long-leasehold property at Eerste Van Leijden Gaelstraat 39a. The building was a former herring warehouse, cooperage included. The double doors would allow for a horse and cart to enter the building; the spacious first floor had an office space and above it was a generous loft. The house was sold by public auction. When Jan leaves the house on the evening of the auction, Annetje sends him off with a clear message: "Remember, Jan, don't you dare sell it on. If you do, I'll walk." Despite his young age, Jan had managed to become something of

"REMEMBER, JAN, DON'T YOU DARE SELL IT ON. IF YOU DO, I'LL WALK"

cars around on the sand. The stables would be located on the ground floor, as well as a small office. The property included a plot of 486 square metres, leaving ample space for the storage of materials and wagons. On 20 April 1922, Jan, Annetje and their two sons move to their new address on Van Leijden Gaelstraat. It would remain the base of operations of Sleeperij J. Lensveld for over fifty years. In the decades following, the building will be renovated several times and adapted to changes within the company as well as the family. One year after the move, on 23 March 1923, Jan Lensveld Sr., father of the founder, dies at the age of 65. Jan finds himself suddenly without his life-long mentor but, together with Annetje, puts his shoulders to the wheel



an expert in buying and selling property. Annetje knew her husband well and realised he sometimes had a hard time resisting the urge to go for the premium. But this time, he had to put his family first.

By then, Jan had already accumulated a considerable amount of money and managed to secure the property for 9800 guilders. He had the first floor converted into a living space, with a kitchen and bedrooms. Sand and gravel would be stored behind the house. The children would often play there, driving their toy

CIGAR BOX

In 1926, the couple welcomed their third son, Cees, and a daughter, Maartje, followed in 1928. As Jan and Annetje's family flourished, so did the business. A balance sheet and a profit and loss account from the fiscal year 1928-1929 has been preserved, showing that Jan had to call in an accounting firm for the first time:

"The state of affairs is such that they do not yet meet all necessary requirements, but we have no doubt that fewer errors

will be made this year. Mr Lensveld is doing everything in his power to provide us with a clear overview of his effects. In turn, we shall review the books each month and determine the cash balance.”

Jan had a habit of jotting down the transported loads on the back of his cigar box. When he came home in the evening, it was Annetje who would go: “Come on, give me that box,” and then note down the day’s orders neatly in the logbook.

From the beautifully yellowed print-through sheets of the typed annual accounts, it is clear that a tremendous amount of change has taken place since the establishment of the company. Jan now owned several properties, including warehouses, stables and workshops, worth over 32,000 guilders in total, an amount that would nowadays equate to about 270,000 euros. He had a mortgage at the bank of R. Mees & Sons, which was paid off in monthly instalments. He also

**ON THE EVE OF
THE GREAT GLOBAL RECESSION
OF THE 1930S, SLEEPERIJ
J. LENSVELD WAS RELUCTANTLY
MAKING THE SWITCH TO
MOTORISED FREIGHT
TRANSPORT**

owned some livestock: seven horses, five cows and seven chickens. The fleet of trucks at the disposal of Sleeperij J. Lensveld had also expanded considerably. In May 1929, the company had 13 freight carts, two manure wagons, two dogcarts - a two-wheeled chariot - one bicycle, two sand wagons and one ordinary cart, the last three of which had been recent purchases. Also part of the company assets were harnesses for the horses, steel planking, various tools and some modest machinery. But the biggest milestone since the early years had been the purchase of “two

Ford cars” on 1 August 1928, for the sum of 3820 guilders. Second hand, that is. On the eve of the great global recession of the 1930s, Sleeperij J. Lensveld was reluctantly making the switch to motorised freight transport. In 1929, the company made a modest profit of some 4000 guilders.

III

CART WORK, FARM WORK AND FIRE

1930 - 1940

High water at the Grote Visserijplein square in Vlaardingen, 1938. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

CART WORK, FARM WORK AND FIRE

CART WORK

The early 1930s were all about family expansion. In 1931, Jan and Annetje had their son Mari, followed by Arie in 1933. With little Harry, as their youngest was soon called, the Lensveld's counted their family of five sons and a daughter complete. Meanwhile, in the US, the collapse of the Wall Street Stock Exchange in October 1929 had hit industry and agriculture hard. Many companies went bankrupt and millions of workers lost their jobs. The economic crisis would eventually spread across the globe and would also greatly impact the Netherlands.

In 1935, 600,000 of the 8 million Dutch citizens were unemployed. In Vlaardingen, the unemployed were put to work in the planning of recreational parks, football fields and a deer park. Jan also contributed to the labour supply by putting young men to work as cart drivers. His youngest son, Harry – now 88 years old – recalls:

“Father did a lot of work for the municipality, transporting the materials for road builders. Once a year, this type of work was outsourced and companies could tender for it. The work was announced in an advertisement. Companies could then make a bid; the contract usually went to the company offering the most competitive rate. Of course, you didn't know what rate the competition would be offering. My father made a bid for 4.70 guilders a day. That price included a horse, cart, coachman and equipment: a pitchfork, a shovel and a 'pan' – a type of trowel. One time, during the early years of the crisis, someone beat his price. The following year, he dropped his price by

50 cents. That meant he wouldn't really be able to afford a cart driver. In those days, many people received financial support from the government, but this only covered the under-aged children. My father hired boys in need of work for a guilder a day. That is how he made it through the crisis.”

Due to his keen pricing, Jan managed to secure several tenders. The municipality was so pleased with his good-value-for-money services, that from the second half



A horse-drawn Lensveld cart and driver at the market in Vlaardingen, circa 1930.

of the 1930s onwards, Sleeperij J. Lensveld was hired annually for all municipal “cart work”. In 1937, large parts of the old town centre required repaving. A local paper, *The Nieuwe Vlaardingsche Courant*, reported on 18 October 1937 that:

“The transport of these materials was done, insofar as possible, with the municipal lorry. The remaining cart work was carried out by J. Lensveld, at the price of 4.20 guilders a day for a full load, including cart driver. For the total amount of work done, Lensveld received 4141.55 guilders.”

Each year, Jan had to fight for his spot and stay ahead of his competitors; no mean feat in times of extreme unemployment. Two adjacent notices from the daily paper, *De Nederlander*, of 29 December 1937 are quite telling: “The cart work for the municipality for 1938 is awarded by public subscription to Mr J. Lensveld.” “The number of job-seeking persons registered at the labour exchange reached 2223 on Saturday.”

Although Lensveld had come into ownership of two Fords, the company still operated mostly with horse traction. Most of the work consisted of delivering and transporting stone, sand and rubble for municipal works; materials that were required in the laying of streets, the demolition of old buildings and the construction of houses. Bricks were brought in by ship from the brickworks in Delft. A team of porters loaded these from the barge onto a wagon, and unloaded them again at the building site. Harry's memory of his father is that of a hard worker:

“It was all manual labour. My father was a strong man, but towards the end of his life he was worn out. Every morning, he had gotten up at six o'clock to take care of the horses. The work with the municipality started at seven, so that's when they had to be at the gate, cart and all. That meant the horses had to be fed and harnessed by that time. Every evening at ten, he was the one who went into the stables to make sure everything was in order. He was always the last one to turn in.”

TEN THOUSAND KILOS OF HAY WAS ALREADY ON FIRE

Overview of the daily prices of transport for “a full team and driver” and the annual turnover between 1924-1939.

Year	Daily price in guilders	Annual turnover in guilders	Number of days worked with 6 teams driver included
1924	4,98	4513	906
1925	5,90	2492	422
1932	6,90	11.608	1682
1936	4,50	4512	1003
1937	4,20	4142	986
1938	5,50	6908	1256
1939	5,75	7518	1307

According to the CBS price index, one guilder in 1924 is equivalent to 17.84 euros in 2020. The value of 1 guilder in 1939 is equivalent to 22.51 euros today.

FARM WORK AND FIRE

Jan loved his animals. When the work was done, he would always check on his cows, grazing in meadows along the floodplains of the River Maas or the Vettenoordse Polder. His horses were given names such as Jans (Jan's), Rode Vos (Red Fox), Bruine Bles (Brown Blaze), Zwarte Bles (Black Blaze) and Lensveld Bles (Lensveld Blaze). Horses had always been part of his life and the affection for the faithful grazers had been passed on from father to son. As a small boy, Harry often went with his father.

“Father was really a farmer at heart,” says Harry. In the summers, Jan kept five cows in the field in addition to his horses; this improved the fertilisation of the soil. Every evening, the cows had to be milked. For a long time, Jan took it upon himself to do this, until he ultimately taught his son Cees, who then took over from him. In the winters, a couple of cows were brought to the slaughterhouse, as there was only room for three in the stables.

Hay was stored in the house's large attic to get them through the winter. On Thursday, 22 January 1936, at eight o'clock in the evening, things took a bad turn. A fire broke out on the first floor of the house on Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat, where beets and other cattle

fodder was stored. Bystanders tried to extinguish the fire with buckets of water, but the fire soon spread via the chimney to the hayloft. When the fire brigade arrived with their deluge gun, ten thousand kilos of hay was already on fire. The next day, newspapers *De Banier* and *De Standaard* report on the event under the header 'Fire in Vlaardingen':

"A suffocating smoke soon developed, complicating matters for the firemen. [...] A great deal of water was released upon the attic, as a result of which, within about half an hour, the danger of the fire spreading had passed. [...] When the fire was discovered, six horses had to be brought to safety from the stable in the bottom half of the building, as well as a cow and a goat, two lorries and a passenger car. [...] The adjacent home of Mr Lensveld also suffered water damage. The cause of the fire is as yet unknown."

THE FREIGHT FLEET

The hayloft burned down completely. Fortunately, there were no casualties in the fire, but the damage was considerable. Towards the end of the decade, danger loomed again - this time of an entirely different order. In neighbouring Germany, the National Socialists led by Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler were on the rise. The tension across Europe was palpable. Meanwhile, Jan was taking several



The Dodge 3-tonne truck with license plate H75816 from 1936. Vlaardingen, late 1930s.

big decisions. In order to be able to take on new jobs and work more efficiently, he had to invest in his freight transport fleet. To this end, he bought a new Dodge Tipper, a truck with registration number H75816, in 1936. The 3-tonne truck was his pride and joy. In June 1938, he spent 1800 guilders on a Chevrolet Truck from Automobile Company Pietersen & Co. on the Broersvest lane in Schiedam, which would become his regular supplier.

A year later, in January 1939, he bought another two Chevrolets and a Bedford Truck from the same firm. For the three cars, Jan paid 7700 guilders, having received a hefty discount of no less than 12 percent. In November, two months after Hitler invaded Poland, sever-

al new trucks were once again registered in his name. This time, brand-new Opel Blitz tippers from General Motors. The vehicles were used in the sand and gravel business Jan established towards the end of the decade, in addition to his regular activities as a carrier. Lensveld's first funnel-head dispenser (sand hopper) was erected at the quay of the Oude Haven. The name "Sleeperij J. Lensveld" was subsequently changed into the more modern "J. Lensveld's Handel en Vervoerbedrijf" (J Lensveld's Trading and Transport Company). And then, on 10 May 1940, just as the brand-new trucks were glistening in the yard, Hitler invaded the Netherlands.

CONFUSING LICENCE PLATES

THE LENSVELD COMPANY ARCHIVES CONTAIN REFERENCES TO SEVERAL CARS WITH THE SAME LICENCE PLATE NUMBER.

The 1948 Chevrolet Advance with license plate number H 75816 is, without a doubt, an entirely different car than the 1935 three-tonne Dodge with that same registration number. What is going on here? Until 1919, any owner of a licence plate number could drive several vehicles under that same registration. Licence plate numbers were registered under the name of the owner, rather than being linked to a specific car. This changed in 1919. From then on, every car was given a unique license plate number. There was a veritable run on license plates, not only because of the new regulations but also because, around the same time, the number of cars owned in the Netherlands increased immensely; from 6676 vehicles in 1919 to 14,782 in 1921. To make matters more confusing, owners were allowed to transfer number plates to a new car when the old one was sold or scrapped. Until the current system of license plates was introduced in 1951, each province used their own numbering system, and the make and model of vehicles was not yet registered.

Until 1932, all licence plates in the province of South Holland began with the letter H. After that, due to the steep increase in the number of vehicles, the letter Z was added (HZ-). When, in 1947, they ran out of HZ numbers, South Holland license plates started using HX.



One of Lensveld's new Opel Blitz 3-tonne vehicles under a sand funnel. Vlaardingen, late 1930s.



One of the two new Chevrolets from 1939. License plate H71134.

N.V. AANNEMING MIJ. J. P. VAN EESTEREN
 BOUW- EN GEMAPEND BETONWERKEN - ONTWERPEN EN UITVOEREN VAN WERKEN IN GEM. BETON

AMERO

ZUIDBLAAK 22 ROTTERDAM

TELEFOON NO. 11645-12845-23100
 NA. 18 UUR 44904
 POSTREKENING 43301
 BANKER: NED. HANDEL MI.

fa. Lensveld,
 1e v. Leyden Gaelstraat 39,
 VLAARDINGEN.

DICT. 1/1K WERK Kadebouw Vlaardingen ONDERWERP sand-en grind
 BELAGEN UW SCHRIJVEN GNS SCHRIJVEN DATUM 12-12-'38
 telef. opgave

OPDRACHTSBEVESTIGING.

MIJNE HEEREN,

Wij hebben het genoegen U op te dragen, het hieronder nader omschrevene, vervat in onze aanvraag d.d. voor den prijs van fl. zie onder zegge:

Levering op keur der Directie van bovengenoemd werk, franco op het werk uit voorraad Keuring op het werk.

Levertijd: direct na indiening factuur en na goedgekeurde en Betaling: 1 maand aanvaardde levering.

Overeengekomen korting: Direct na iedere levering en bij termijnaanvragen factuur in te dienen, onder vermelding van bovenstaand werk.

Voor goede orde zien wij Uw tegenbevestiging geheel overeenkomstig deze opdracht omgaand tegensoet.

Omzetbelasting of de kosten hieruit voortvloeiende zijn in deze prijzen begrepen.

OMSCHRIJVING: de levering omvat het benodigde betonzand en grind van het bovengenoemd werk per auto op het werk aangevoerd.

Het grind voor den prijs van f. 3.50 per m³.
 " zand " " " f. 1.50 " "

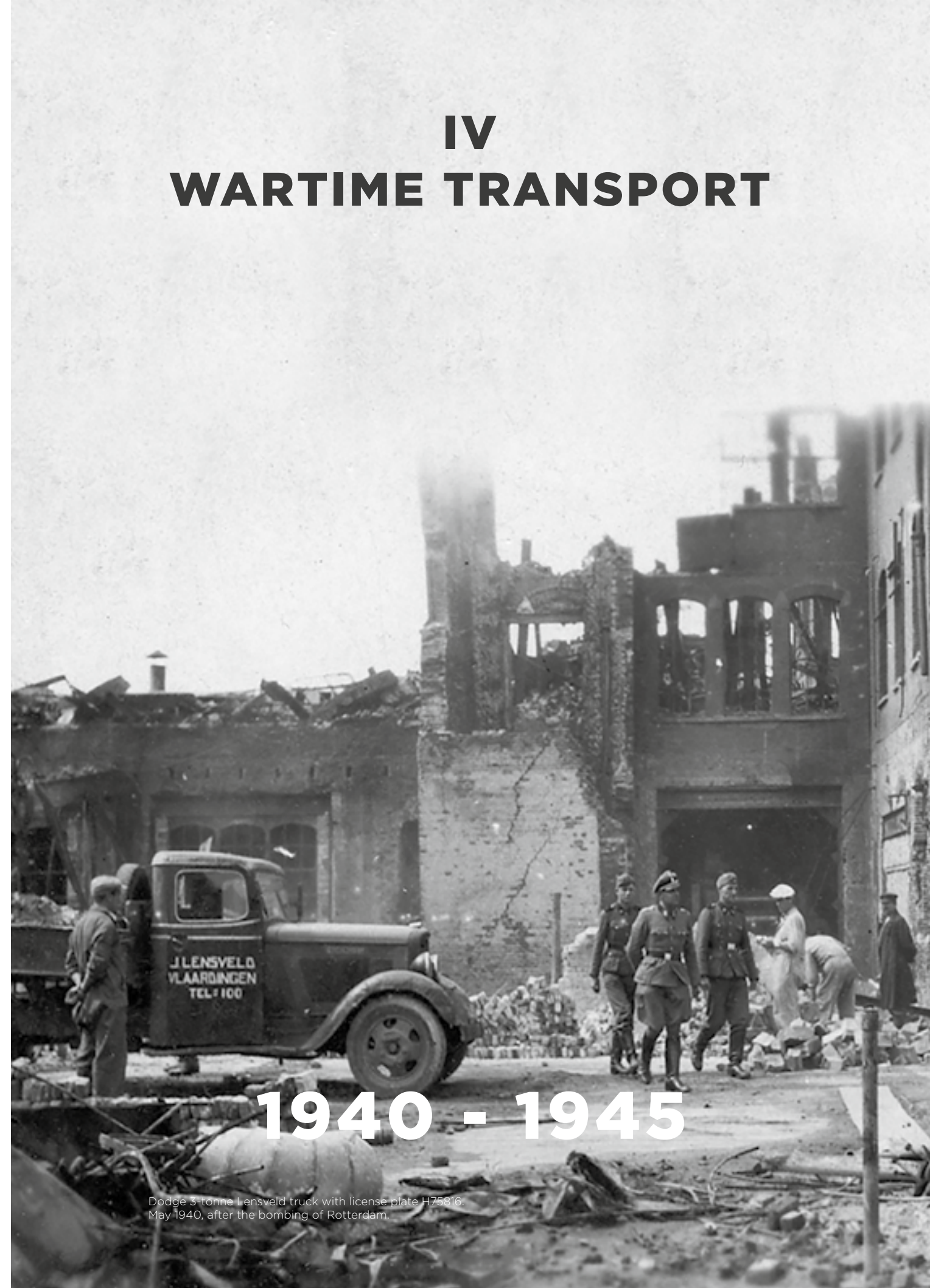
Alles gemeten op het middel van vervoer. Voor de geleverde hoeveelheden zullen door den uitvoerder bannen worden verstrekt, welke bij de rekening moeten worden overlegd.

*Benoem
 bevestiging.*

Hoogachtend,
 N.V. Aanneming Mij.
 van Eesteren

ALLE CORRESPONDENTIE ZUIDBLAAK 22

IV WARTIME TRANSPORT



1940 - 1945

Order confirmation from contractor J.P. van Eesteren, of Rotterdam, for the delivery of sand and gravel by car by the Lensveld company for the reinforcement of a quay wall in Vlaardingen, December 12, 1938.

Dodge 3-tonne Lensveld truck with license plate H75816. May 1940, after the bombing of Rotterdam.

WARTIME TRANSPORT

CONFISCATION

The first few days after the German invasion, the promptly assembled Dutch legions managed to hold out against the German invaders. That is, until 14 May when, in the early afternoon, German bombers hit the inner city of Rotterdam. The resulting fires reduced nearly the entire historic city centre to ashes. The smoke could be seen and smelled for miles around. Under pressure from the threat that other big cities would be next, the Dutch government capitulated one day later. An estimated 900 people were killed in the air strike. Nearly 80,000 people lost their homes overnight.



Clearing debris after the bombing of Rotterdam, May 1940. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

Six days after the bombardment, the distribution centre in Vlaardingen, charged with the distribution of rationed goods, granted J. Lensveld's Transport Company a permit to drive to Rotterdam each day with a team of twenty men to clear rubble. There is a picture in the archives of a J. Lensveld wagon, loaded with rubble amidst the remains of burnt-out houses. During the first year of the occupation, the Germans remained fairly quiet, so as to not antagonise the Dutch population. Nevertheless, in July 1940, they came knocking on the door of the house at Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat 39a. Jan could but grit his teeth as he watched the Germans confiscate his five brand-new trucks. He would never see the cars again.

JAN COULD BUT GRIT HIS TEETH AS HE WATCHED THE GERMANS CONFISCATE HIS FIVE BRAND-NEW TRUCKS.

When the war started, Lensveld had a fleet of nine motorised vehicles. After July 1940, only four cars remained: two Opels, a Dodge and a Ford. As petrol soon became unavailable, many cars and buses were equipped with a gas generator; a device that extracts gas from burning pit coal, brown coal, wood or peat. The cars of J. Lensveld were also fitted with generators to provide them with fuel. The Ford ran on peat coke, the Dodge on coal gas and the Opels on pit coal. In the morning, the boys needed

at least half an hour to get the engines going, so the cars were only called upon for the transport of heavy loads.

The confiscation of over half the fleet had major consequences for the company. Motorised traffic was no longer permitted in the inner city of Vlaardingen. The municipal work now largely came

down to the eight horses, which could hardly cope with the heavy workload. In June 1942, Jan requested an exemption for bringing lorries into the inner city from the A.B.D., the Motor Vehicle Charter Service (Autobevrachtingsdienst) in Rotterdam. This request was not granted, but six months later the National Traffic Inspection did grant him a

permit for "transport on behalf of third parties by means of horse traction". At that time, J. Lensveld's Transport Company employed eight drivers and a stable boy. Of the 20 horse-drawn carts still in the possession of the company on 1 September 1939, 11 were left: seven sand wagons and four open barge wagons. When, in early 1944, two horses die, Jan was granted permission from the N.O.B., the Dutch Professional Organisation for the Transport of Goods (Nederlandse Organisatie voor het Beroepsgoederenvervoer) to buy a single horse.



Car with gas generator. Photo: The Niestadt bros. Memory of the Netherlands collection.

Like many others, J. Lensveld took a few steps back in time during the war, in addition to complying with all the restrictions imposed on carriers by the occupying

forces. For his work for the municipality and the necessary transport of sand, gravel and coal, Jan was fortunate to be able to fall back on his horses and freight carts.

forces. For his work for the municipality and the necessary transport of sand, gravel and coal, Jan was fortunate to be able to fall back on his horses and freight carts.

FOOD TRANSPORTS

In the winter of 1944, when food was scarce in the Netherlands, many people went hungry. The need was especially great in the bigger cities. In the children's hospital of Rotterdam, children were growing severely malnourished. Jan and Annetje's oldest two sons, Jan Jr. and Leen - 24 and 25 years old at the time - decided to take action. Every week, they drove to the Northern provinces of Friesland and Groningen with Sunlight soap, salt and laundry detergent from Lever's Soap Company in Vlaardingen. There, the food committee traded the goods for wheat, flour and food supplies for the children's hospital. Fully stocked, the boys then drove all the way back to Rotterdam. The Lensveld company archives contain a document that commemorates these trips during the Hunger Winter: a certificate of exemption for driving with goods. This was mandatory, because black market trade was flourishing. It took the boys a week on the road each time - but they always went in pairs, never alone. On several occasions, it was Jan Sr. who joined one of his sons on the road. The trips stopped when the Germans took control of the soap factory in mid-February 1945 and no more soap was being produced.

The Lensveld's were doing alright under the circumstances. The Germans allowed Jan to keep a pig, so occasionally, the



family would get to eat some meat. After the bombardment of Rotterdam, Jan instated a new safety measure; as soon as the air-raid alarm sirens went off at night, the whole family had to retreat to the small office on the ground floor. They slept side by side on mattresses on the floor. The ceiling of the office was made of concrete; Jan felt that his family was better protected against the bomb shells there.

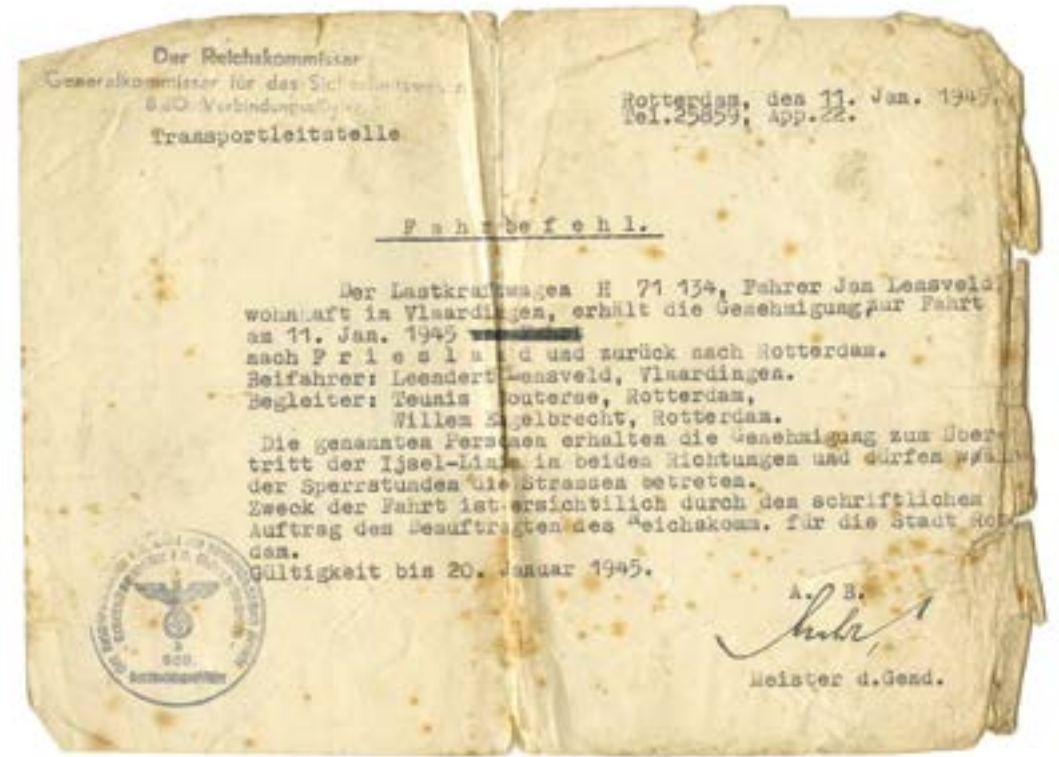


"Provisional Permit" for the transport of a team of workmen to Rotterdam.

THE BOMBING OF LEVER'S SOAP FACTORY

One month after the seizure of Lever's Soap Company factory on the banks of the River Maas, which the Germans had set up as a launching pad for V-1 flying bombs, the site was bombed by the British. It was 23 March 1945 and 12-year-old Harry was helping his father work the fields across from the factory when he heard a disturbing noise:

"We were at work in what is now the location of the Delta Hotel, less than three hundred metres from the factory. My father was spreading manure out over the field and I was shovelling horse dung into a three-wheeled cart pulled by one of the horses. At one point, I heard a humming sound and looked up to see several aircraft approaching in formation. On the other side of the River Maas, they dived down and flew very low over Lever's Sunlight Soap factory. That's where the Germans kept the V-1 flying bombs, aimed at London. Before I knew it, they had dropped their bombs [...]. I nearly had a heart attack and ran to my father. The equally startled horse galloped after me, cart and all. But father kept his cool. He managed to calm us down, and together we stared at the column of smoke



Travel document of the German Reich Commissioner for Lensveld.

NARROW ESCAPE

This fearlessness meant that, twice, Jan found himself in a precarious situation with the Germans, from which he narrowly escaped with his life. The first was in 1942, when he was stopped by two German soldiers on his way home and was asked to

rising up from the factory. The planes had already disappeared again. Then we just carried on with the work. Father didn't seem to be afraid at all."



Jan Lensveld and Annetje Burger, circa 1947.



Indemnity certificate for carrying goods to occupied Friesland during the Hunger Winter.

give up his bicycle. Jan had no intention of doing so. He turned his bicycle around and rode off. The soldiers immediately opened fire. Jan ducked into a side street and rode his bike straight into a house, thus escaping the German bullets.

The next incident took place towards the very end of the war. It was April 1945, and in large parts of the country, the Germans were retreating. A troop of soldiers was walking down Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat. One of them demanded that Jan give up one of his horses, but he refused. In the heated argument that follows, the man drew his pistol and put it to Jan's head. A German naval officer, who happened to be passing by, intervened and ordered the soldier to stand down. It

was the second time Jan escaped by the skin of his teeth.

Was it naivety or sheer impetuosity that made Jan commit such acts? It was courageous, if nothing else. This fearlessness characterises Jan Lensveld; cool-headed in hot water and ever-straightforward. But Jan was also a man with a strong sense of justice; injustice was something he could not endure. That this nearly cost him his life twice, was something that did not bother him for very long.

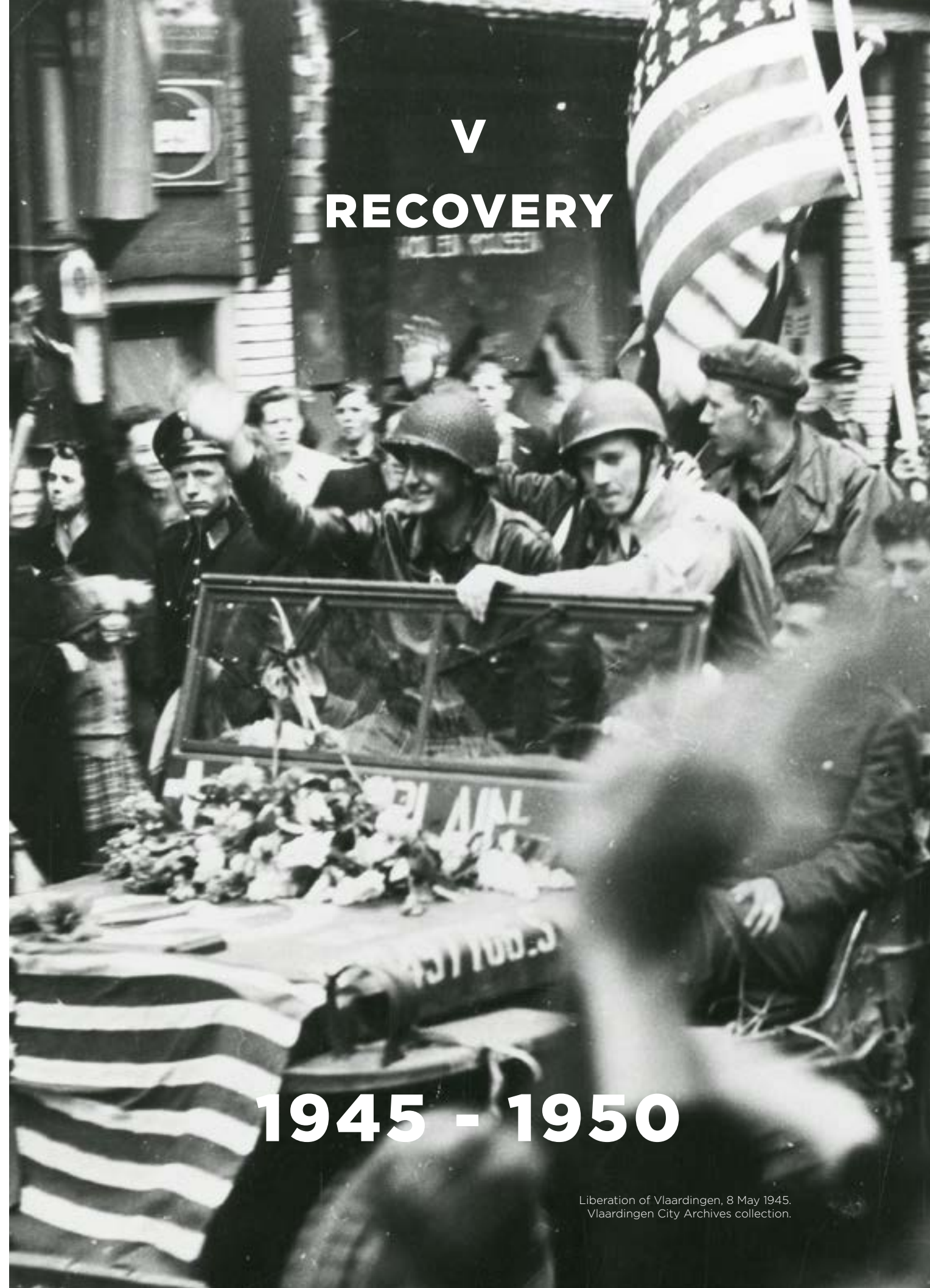


Jan Lensveld Jr and Johanna Timmerman's wedding anniversary, 20 July 1942. Bottom left side: Jan's sister Maartje Lensveld.



Jan Lensveld Jr and Johanna Timmerman's wedding anniversary, 20 July 1942. Pictured with both parental units. From left to right: Jan Lensveld Sr, unknown, Annetje Lensveld-Burger, Jan Lensveld Jr., Mrs Timmermans, Johanna Timmermans and Mr Timmermans.

V RECOVERY



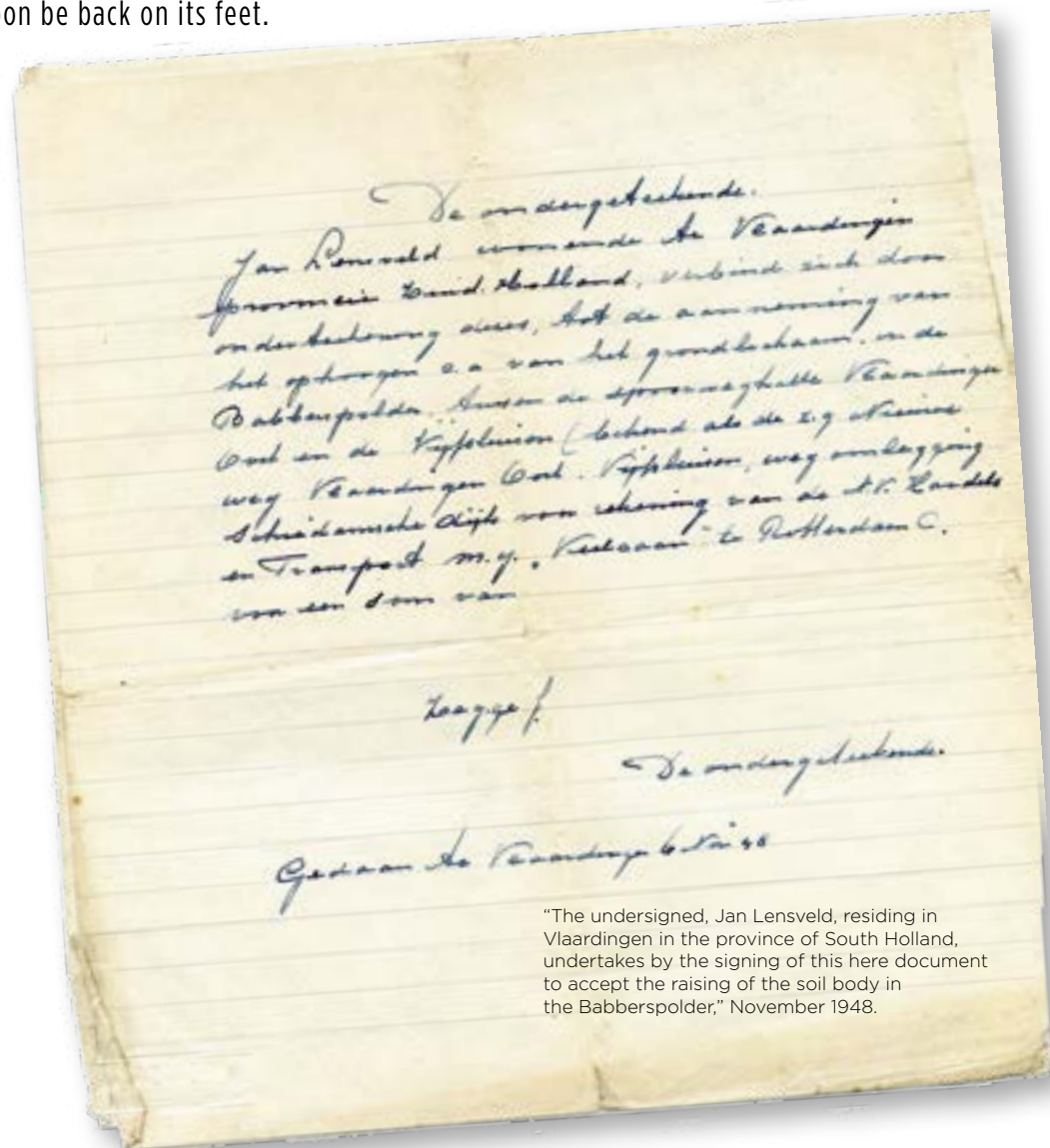
1945 - 1950

Liberation of Vlaardingen, 8 May 1945. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

RECOVERY

POPULATION GROWTH AND HOUSING SHORTAGE

On 5 May 1945, the Netherlands was liberated from the German occupation. In Vlaardingen, it was a combination of American parachutists and resistance fighters in hiding that had liberated the population from the occupying forces. Though freed, the Netherlands was left devastated and in great poverty. Everything was in short supply: food, shoes, clothing, housing, means of transport, fuel, bicycles and building materials. In Vlaardingen, even during the war, 400 emergency dwellings had been constructed in the Babberspolder area to house people from Rotterdam who had been made homeless; houses that were not suitable for permanent residence. Many historic buildings in the inner city were also in a deplorable state and declared uninhabitable. The Dutch government declared the housing shortage “public enemy number one” and encouraged the population to be conserving. The idea was that, through hard work, un wasteful living and frugality, the country would soon be back on its feet.



“The undersigned, Jan Lensveld, residing in Vlaardingen in the province of South Holland, undertakes by the signing of this here document to accept the raising of the soil body in the Babberspolder,” November 1948.



Jan Lensveld Sr. and his son Leen in front of the 1948 Chevrolet Advance.

To make matters worse, one year after the liberation the nation had to deal with the baby boom; within one year, the population of the Netherlands had increased by 150,000. In Vlaardingen alone, the population saw explosive growth: from 5,000 to over 46,000 in 1950. This was not only due to the increase in births. Existing companies that were hit during the war picked up where they left off and started to expand. Meanwhile, new basic industries popped up on the banks of the Nieuwe Maas river. Mayor Heusdens and alderman De Bruijn of Vlaardingen realised that something needed to be done. In 1947, architect Willem van Tijen was contracted to design an urban development plan

in early 1946, many army trucks were left behind. The hooded trucks of American General Motor Company (GMCs) were released by the National Traffic Inspectorate for company use and sold at auction. Jan immediately applied for a driving permit and bought 17 army trucks and one big Mack. He had the army loading bodies replaced by hydraulic tipping constructions, manufactured by Netam – the Netherlands Tank, Appliance and Machine

THE PURCHASE OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE GMC DUMP TRUCKS WOULD PROVE TO HAVE BEEN A GOLDEN MOVE

for the expansion of the Indische Buurt and Babberspolder districts, as well as the redevelopment of the inner city. The philosophy behind the plan

was that of a balance between life, work and recreation. The motto was: build, build, build – but in a well-considered way.

GMCs

Five months after the liberation, Lensveld was left with three horses and one car – a low point in the history of the company. When the allies started returning home



Jan's daughter Maartje in front of a Canadian Dodge T110. The gunner's hatch is still visible atop the cabin.



From left to right: Frans Giesen, Harry Lensveld, Van Leeningen, Jan Lensveld Jr., Mari Lensveld and Karel de Brug in front of a MACK NM 6-tonne vehicle.

Factory - in Rotterdam. In order to be able to store and maintain the trucks, Jan had a large roof built over the yard, along with a shed and a garage, in early 1947. The trucks were immediately utilised for the transport of sand, gravel and stone for the construction of houses in the Indische Buurt district. The purchase of the indestructible GMC dump trucks would prove to have been a golden move. They were used well into the 1960s. Although the horse and cart would continue to grace Dutch streets for a while longer, Jan realised that the glory days of horse traction were now gone forever.

With the advent of the automotive era, Jan lost his zest a little. He had always been a man of horses. "Besides," as he would tell his boys, "a car costs a fortune; it'll never pay for itself." The following decades would prove him wrong. But the war years were also a contributing factor to Jan's waning enthusiasm; they did more to him than he seemed willing to show. It had become time to take a step

back and hand the business over to a new generation. His sons Jan Jr. and Leen had been working for their father's company from an early age. For Jan, it was a matter of course that his children should take over from him.

A PROPER FAMILY BUSINESS

Jan and Annetje's children had grown up at Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat 39a, amidst the heaps of sand, the carts, the hay and the horses. Their playground stretched as far as the ropeway, where the new lorries and the old wagons were stored. To them, the drivers and haulers were simply part of the family.

Jan Jr. had left home during the war to marry Johanna Timmermans, 21 years old, on 20 July 1942. The couple went to live on the Surinamesingel, where their daughter Ans was born. While Jan Jr. focused on the general management of the company and securing orders, Leen took care of maintaining the vehicle fleet. Twenty-one-year-old Cees had left for the Dutch East Indies in 1946, but resumed his duties after his return, three-and-a-half years later. Mari and Harry, the youngest two brothers, would be charged with

more and more tasks and responsibilities as the years went by. There was no time for them to get settled in. The boys were only about 13 when they were first sent out on horse-and-cart errands. Jan Sr. al-



Unloading sand at the Westhavenkade quay in one of Lensveld's GMC Tipper's.

ways thought that they would learn best on the job. Those first years after the war took some elbow grease. Under their father's watchful eye, the boys all put their backs into it.



From left to right: Mari, Maartje, Harry and their mother Annetje, circa 1947.

"We'll see about that licence later"

Jan Lensveld Jr. was only 18 years old when, in 1938, he was sent out in a lorry on an errand. It wasn't long before, at a busy junction, poor Jan collided with a Chevrolet cab.

The *Schiedamse Courant* newspaper reported on the incident the next day: "A loud scream and then dead silence made one fear the worst. Fortunately, the four ladies occupying the vehicle appeared to have sustained no more damage than a having been slightly shaken up [...]. The material damage to both cars is, however, extensive. [...] As to the question of blame; one can assume that the sand lorry had been driving a little too fast, but according to the law, did have the right of way."

It is quite possible that Jan Jr. did not have a driving licence at that time. However, his father was not too bothered about this fact and would often say: "We'll see about that licence later."



Jan Jr. and Mari in front of a Dodge WC 1/2-tonne pick-up truck.

Dumping sand in a MACK NM 6-tonne truck.



Unloaded from the ship into the Ward la France. With Mari.



The Chevrolet H75816 under a sand funnel.

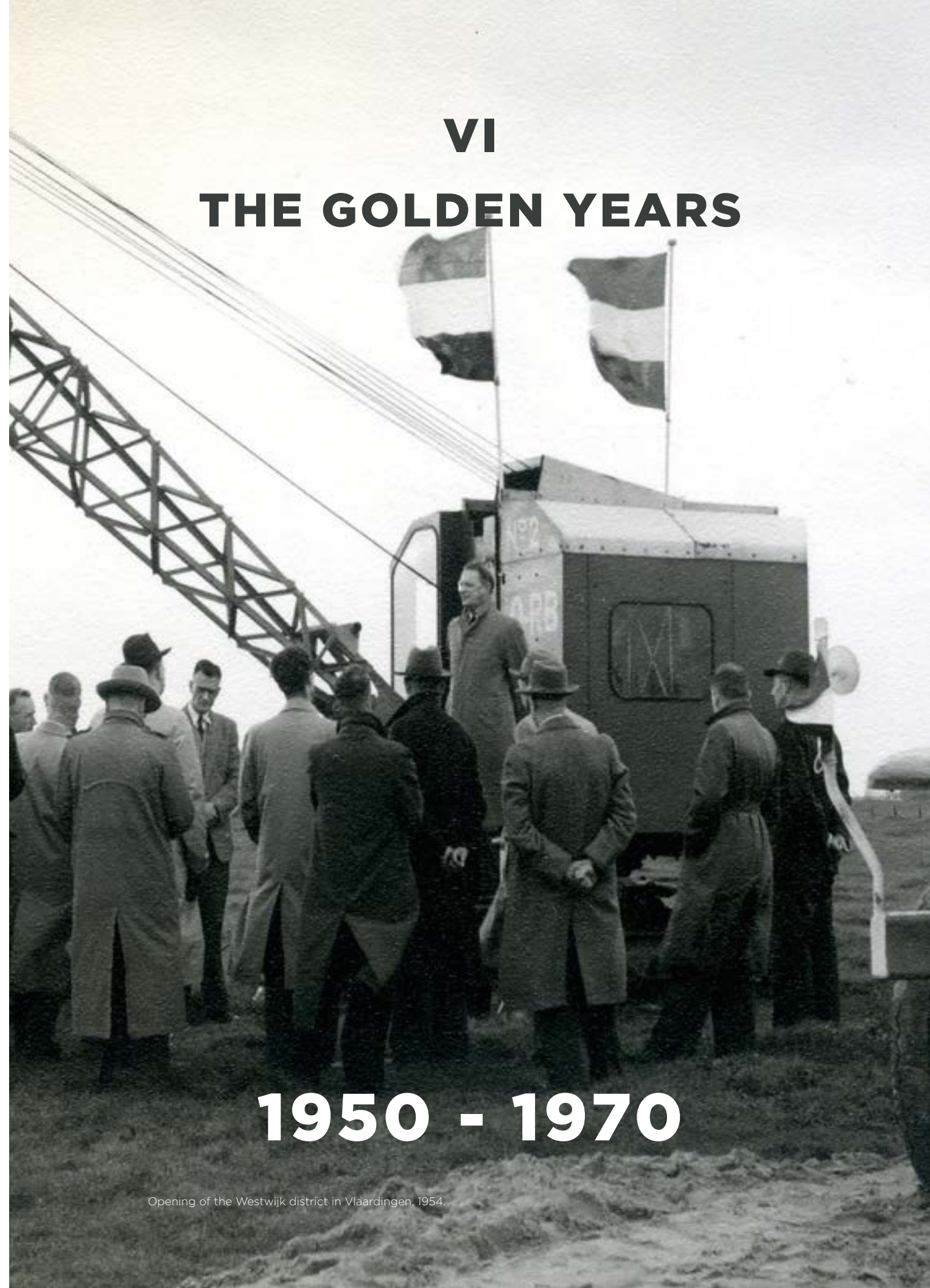


Mari and Van Leeningen in front of a MACK NM 6-tonne truck.



The indestructible GMC "tipper dumptrucks" from Lensveld on the ropewalk, circa 1946.

VI THE GOLDEN YEARS



1950 - 1970

Opening of the Westwijk district in Vlaardingen, 1954.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

VLAARDINGEN EXPANDING

The period between 1950 and 1970 was one of unprecedented economic growth. Industry spread at breakneck speed across the South bank of the Nieuwe Maas and modern districts had appeared in what had once been a wide view of the polder landscape. In 1951, the residents of the Indische Buurt district, where 4,500 new homes (so-called 'Shell flats') had been built, had barely moved in or the city had already begun to expand once more. On 20 October 1954, the first shovel ceremoniously broke ground for the Westwijk plan, an ultra-modern district in the outer polder, designed by Van Tijen. A plan that would take two decades to complete. Jan Jr. was there, on this memorable occasion.

"J. Lensveld Transportation" adorned the trucks in proud white lettering.



Breaking ground for the construction of the Westwijk district in the presence of the City Council, 1954.

Charged with all transport for the plan, the company would enter its golden years. Between 1955 and 1960, 6,000 homes were built here. High-rise apartment buildings with 10-14 floors, smaller buildings of up to four floors, single-family homes, maisonettes, villas and bungalows. In early 1957, the first residents were handed the keys. Canals were dug and shopping centres, churches, schools, stations, hospitals and

swimming pools were built. Parks, public gardens and roads were constructed to relieve the city centre of through traffic. The iconic Delta Hotel and the Maas Boulevard were erected on the banks of the river Maas. The inner city underwent a complete overhaul: not a working day went by without piles being driven into the ground somewhere. Vlaardingen became the fastest growing municipality in the Netherlands, and Lensveld was there for it all.

ARCHITECT WILLEM VAN TIJEN

Architect Willem Van Tijen is regarded as the founding father of social housing. He designed the first so-called gallery flats in the Netherlands and achieved worldwide fame with his design of the Westwijk district in post-war Vlaardingen. Fellow architects and other interested parties from home and abroad flocked to admire this revolutionary housing project with their own eyes. Busloads of them were taken along the newly constructed roads to see the first completed homes. From behind the coach windows, they must have seen the Lensveld staff in action.

It is unlikely that Van Tijen and Jan Lensveld Sr. ever met; one was a renowned architect and the other a foreman. And yet, there are many parallels between the men's lives. Both were born at the end of the 19th century; Van Tijen in 1894 and Lensveld in 1895. They both married in 1919 and died in 1974. And of course, the careers of both Van Tijen and Lensveld were inextricably linked to the large housing projects taking place in Vlaardingen after the war.



Start of the construction of the Westwijk district, 1954. Photo: Breur. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

SAND HOPPERS, DRAGLINES AND TIPPERS

The construction of the new district and the laying of roads required immense quantities of earth to be moved. In order to be able to perform all the necessary earthwork, the company invested in modern draglines: excavators on Ruston caterpillar tracks. In 1955 LV bought three Bedford trucks from Pietersen & Co. Lensveld then immediately had these trucks and two GMCs fitted with a steel cargo box and a hydraulic tipping construction by Netam, increasing their load-bearing capacity to 6-7 tonnes. Together with the sturdy 1946 GMCs, these were used for transporting sand and gravel from the Oude Haven harbour to the unloading bay on the construction

site. The army trucks were ideally suited as all-terrain vehicles on the heavy clay soil. This was, however, not the only equipment the company invested in during that time. Along the Westhavenkade quay, seven large sand hoppers were erected from which sand and gravel, brought in by sand barges, could be dispensed onto the trucks. Harry recalls:

"There was a Sand Tippers' Association in Papendrecht; you would tell to them what you would be needing. One of those sand barges had a cargo capacity of between 100-320 tonnes. Unloading was done by the skipper himself. Another - the so-called 'bakloper' (tray runner) - descended into the hold with a huge empty tray



Sandbarge for the Lensveld sand hoppers.



Dragline and GMC in the 1950s. Expansion of Vlaardingen.

with large handles. Once filled with sand, the tray was hoisted up by a winch on a high boom until it hung suspended above the hopper. From there, the sand was unloaded into the hopper and dispensed onto the truck.”



Earthmoving for the construction of a school. Dragline and GMC in the polder, 1955.

The sand barges arrived in Vlaardingen at night, where they would drop anchor at the quay. Each morning, starting at 7, the ships were unloaded under the watchful eye of Cees, who was the one responsible for the delivery of sand, gravel and other materials. Every day until 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when the work on the

TRANSVEMIJ

In the early 1960s, transport companies were finding it increasingly difficult to get good coverage on their insurance. The transport sector was not held in very high regard; carriers were seen as ragamuffins and were not much liked among insurance companies. Premiums for insuring both lorries and cargo were excessively high and had to be paid a year in advance. In case of damages, carriers ran the risk of their insurance being terminated in its entirety, without a refund of the premium. All in all, the insurance companies held all the power and carriers were vulnerable. The demand for an ‘insurance company for us’, that would consider the interests of the transport sector, was great.

Jan Lensveld Jr., by then already a board member of the trade association for professional freight transport (NOB), together with fellow carrier Arie Hooymeijer (who was also from Vlaardingen), made an urgent plea for the establishment of a dedicated insurance company for the transport sector. Mr Van Donkelaar, chairman of the NOB, was commissioned to investigate the possibilities, but immediately ran into a problem: an initial fund of a million euros in shares would first have to be put in by the interested parties. Without the slightest hesitation, Jan and Arie were the first carriers to contribute, each putting in 100,000 euros. 6 December 1962 marked the establishment of Transvemij, the very first dedicated insurance company for the transport sector.



Mr. J. Lensveld as vice-chairman of the board during the annual meeting of 1973.

This meant that haulers could not only get proper insurance but were also able to exercise a direct influence on policy by joining as members of this cooperative insurance association. It was a milestone for the transport sector, and the start of a special collaboration between Transvemij and Lensveld that lives on to this day. Looking back, Jan Lensveld said in an interview in 1995:

“The insurance sector gave us two years at most. It succeeded, because, in addition to the founders, many other transport companies [...] supported the plan financially, without reservation. [...] This is the most beautiful and most successful initiative to have ever come out of our industry! [...] Together, we have achieved something that is truly unique in the Netherlands. Our successors will now have a dedicated insurance company, just like that. But we’ve had to fight for it.”



Mari on the ropewalk next to a 1956 4-tonne Bedford truck.

construction site is finished, Cees could be found in the hut on the quay. It would be his office for years. For over 20 years, Lensveld's hoppers would characterise the cityscape of the old centre, until in 1975, three of the seven funnels were re-located to the Buitenhaven harbour. The rest were demolished.

The company maintained its own fleet of trucks. Under the direction of Leen, now workshop manager, two mechanics, a sheet-metal worker and a painter worked to maintain the trucks. They ensured that the engines ran smoothly and that the hydraulic tippers, which were used intensively, were given new plating on time. The painter did the upkeep of the lacquer and the lettering.

THE FLOOD OF '53

The 1950s started off prosperously and the Dutch economy was on the rise once more. But then, on the night of 31 January 1953, the country was hit by a flood of unprecedented scale; the North Sea flood of 1953. A combination of spring tide and storm surge caused the dykes to burst and icy water from the North Sea rushed over the country at a devastating speed. The flood hit the islands in the provinces of Zeeland and South Holland particularly hard, but parts of North Brabant were also under water. Nearly 1,850 people and tens of thousands of animals were washed away by the water and drowned. Some 100,000 people lost their homes and possessions. That night, the tension was tangible in Vlaardingen. The storm raged

over the city, and by morning the water was pushing up at the railway embankment, which was dangerously close to



Relief work on a country road in a flooded area. Memory of the Netherlands collection.



Evacuees leaving a flooded area. Island of Schouwen, part of the province of Zeeland, 1953. Memory of the Netherlands collection.



Putting up sandbags in Vlaardingen against the rising water, February 1953. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

collapsing. In all haste, firemen and volunteers were called in to fill bags with sand. The Lensveld brothers did not hesitate for a moment and fired up their GMCs. Together with trucks from the municipality, the boys and several of their drivers took the full bags from the municipal storage site to potential breaking points around the city. The situation remained critical throughout the day, with all hands working non-stop to reinforce the locks, quays and levees. The news of the disaster in Zeeland had begun to trickle in and the city's inhabitants were preparing for the worst. Fortunately, it never came to that. Over the course of the day, the water level subsided and

THE LENSVELD BROTHERS DID NOT HESITATE FOR A MOMENT AND FIRED UP THEIR GMCs

the imminent threat passed. The people of Vlaardingen could stop to catch their breath. However, although no people were injured, the damage to businesses along the Maas and Nieuwe Waterweg canal was enormous.

The news spread throughout the country, and all of the Netherlands sympathised with the victims of the disaster. The very next day, Vlaardingen started to organise aid drives. Volunteers went from door to door to collect money for those affected. The following day, the joint women's unions, led by the wife of the mayor, called upon the inhabitants to donate household items. Every lorry and horse-drawn cart in the surrounding area was utilised for the collection of donated goods. Chairs, mattresses, tables, clothes, blankets; people gave what they could. After the items were sorted, the loaded lorries headed for the disaster area. Lensveld made all resources the company has available to help transport the items and assist the authorities on site with the evacuation of people. The disaster would forever remain a black mark on collective memory of the Dutch.



Relief action in Vlaardingen on the day after the flood. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.



Jan Lensveld and Annetje Burger, 1955.

ESTABLISHING V.O.F. J. LENSVELD & ZONEN

During what became known as 'The Disaster Year', 1953, Jan Sr. chose to permanently withdraw from the company. After 30 years, he and Annetje left the building in which he had started the business and moved into a house on the Floreslaan lane. Their sons, Leen and Harry, moved with them. Cees had married a Joke Schouten in 1952. Their daughter Maartje had married a farmer, Aat Poot, in 1955 and their son Mari, who had gotten married to Ann Poot in that same year, stayed behind in the house on Van Leijden Gaelstraat. Jan took his sons to the notary to have them registered as co-owners and with that, on 24 November 1955, the establishment of V.O.F. J. Lensveld & Zonen (Lensveld & Sons) was official.

For years, the family came together at Jan and Annetje's every Sunday, to 'talk shop' and to discuss the daily goings-on over coffee. Annetje was always present for those meetings. She was, as became evident at the very start of the marriage, an energetic woman who was active-

ly involved in her sons' lives. Should the company invest in a new vehicle? Aye, says Annetje. When, in 1954 the business premises on Van Leijden Gaelstraat were expanded to include a real front office, the business meetings at the coffee table with father and mother Lensveld were over for good.

SETTING SIGHTS BEYOND THE BORDER

It was in 1959 that Jan Lensveld Jr. applied for a licence from the Dutch Organisation for International Road Transport (Nederlandse Internationale Wegvervoer Organisatie) for the "cross-border transport of goods". In the handwritten elaboration on the back, Jan mentioned that the company had seen 'prosperous growth' since the Second World War. Due to the expansion of the municipality and the rapid rise of industrialisation, the need for transport had only grown. Among Lensveld's clients, export was becoming increasingly popular, resulting in a growing demand for transport across the border. As many of the local transport companies did not have foreign licences, many customers were regrettably starting to look elsewhere. When Lensveld was awarded such a contract, they had to 'go to immense lengths and call all around the world' to complete the job successfully. It was time to change this, especially when: 'It concerns construction works of an incredibly large scale, for which special equipment



Jan "the Coffee Pot" van Straatten with his Henschel, 1959.



Lensveld GMC Kipper. Prof. Teldersstraat, 1963.

is required.' And for that, one needed Lensveld. That is why the company requested a permit for crossing the border with a combination tractor and trailer, with a loading capacity of 18-20 tonnes.

The foundation for the transportation of long building materials had been laid. In addition to the domestic market, Lensveld would now turn its attention to countries like Germany and the United Kingdom. The company was gradually starting to specialise in the transport of steel - pipes, sheets and profiles - from Germany and the Netherlands to the UK, and the transport of exceptionally long materials by road.

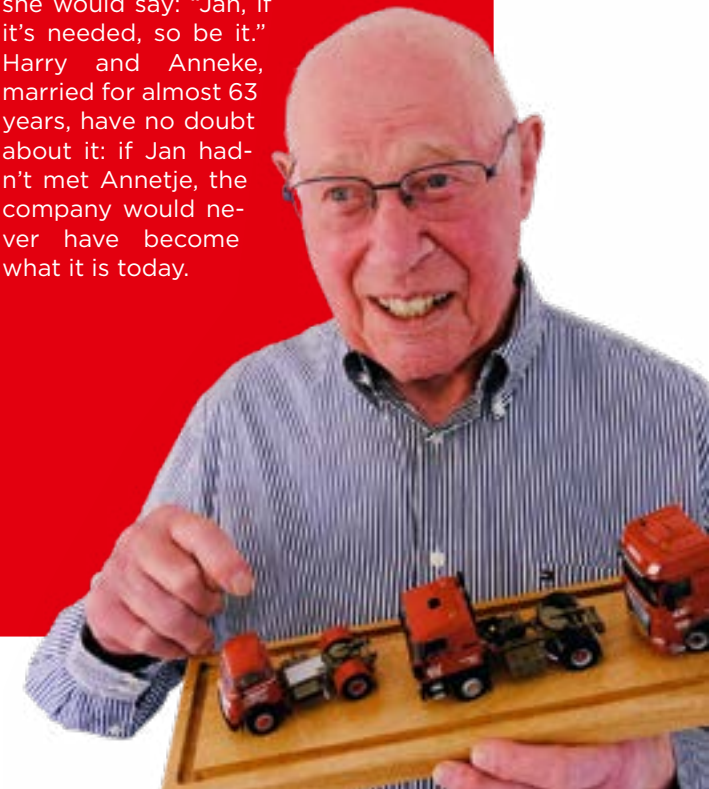
THE 1960S: INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT AND DOMESTIC EXCAVATION

Aside from the transport branch, which was Mari's responsibility, the earthwork and the sand and gravel trade were doing well in the 1960s. All around Vlaardingen, Lensveld's sand trucks were going to and fro. New bulldozers helped in the construction of the Holywijk north of Vlaardingen, provincial roads and the Botlek and Europoort area: an industrial port district near Rotterdam. 1962-1967 saw the construction of the Benelux Tunnel, connecting the towns along the banks of the river Maas: Vlaardingen, Schiedam, Maasluis and Rotterdam. The company was involved in the completion of the tunnel, which was incredibly

Harry Lensveld.
Photo: Arie Wapenaar.

HARRY

From the balcony of his apartment, Harry looks out over Westwijk. The youngest son of founder Jan Lensveld is now 88 years old, but still works for LV. Every week, he is on location to make his rounds, collect some mail and have a chat. Everyone knows him. Recently, the current CEO, Mark van Herk, came to pick him up and congratulate him on his 50th work anniversary. Harry joined the payroll in 1971 and has remained on it ever since. Having started as a tipper driver, from there he worked his way up through office accounting. Harry points north. "We dug and constructed this entire district. Gardens, canals, ponds; the expansion went ever on. My father had a mercantile spirit, but he was also a frugal man. In the 1920s, when he would go to the horse market in Rotterdam to buy a horse, he always made sure he had some money left over afterwards; a little buffer. My father built the company up from scratch, without any starting capital. Within just a few years, he managed to put some money aside to buy a house and start the whole thing up. My mother supported him in every way. As they say: 'A business won't go far if the wife isn't behind it.' Well, that was definitely true for LV." Anneke, Harry's wife, totally agrees with him: "My mother-in-law was very administration-savvy, she was great at getting things in order. If we needed to purchase a new car and dad refused, she would say: "Jan, if it's needed, so be it." Harry and Anneke, married for almost 63 years, have no doubt about it: if Jan hadn't met Annetje, the company would never have become what it is today.





Unloading sand from a GMC CCKW with one of Lensveld's Ruston Bucyrus draglines.

important for the economic development of Vlaardingen, the waterway area, local road traffic and the transport sector.

During this period, the activities of J. Lensveld & Zonen could be divided into roughly three segments: a contracting business, charged with the organisation and coordination of construction projects, the sand and gravel trade, and domestic and foreign transport.

A record has been kept of the investments made in the fleet between 1965-1971, which paints a clear picture of the focus on certain business activities during this period.

Major investments were made in tractors and trailers for international transport: of the 37 tractors the company owned during this time, five are utilised for domestic transport and no fewer than 32 are employed for transport abroad. Six of the semi-trailers used for international transport are extendable, rendering them especially suitable for the transport of extremely long pipes and tubes, one of the specialist services with which J. Lensveld & Zonen sets itself apart.

Within the Netherlands, the focus of activities was mainly on earth-moving, excavation and the supply of sand and materials for various different construction projects, as well as the removal of rubble. The company had 28 tippers and 23 excavators available for the work in the region,

including draglines, bulldozers, hydraulic excavators, two rollers and a crane. There were also nine container vehicles, seven service vehicles and six flat trailers. Some of the vehicles were acquired second-hand, but for the most part they were bought new. They served for two to five years and were then scrapped or sold on. In the mid-1960s, the drivers mainly drove Henschel tractors, but towards the end of the decade, other German brands such as Mercedes, DAF and Volvo were used more and more by the company. Especially popular brands for the tippers were Terberg, Ginaf, Henschel and DAF. To be able to deploy all vehicles, Lensveld needed at least 75 drivers, as well as administrative staff and maintenance staff for the garage. Slowly but surely, people from outside the family also started to take up managerial positions within the company. Looking back on twenty years of construction, it is not unreasonable to

**TO BE ABLE TO
DEPLOY ALL VEHICLES,
LENSVELD NEEDED
AT LEAST
75 DRIVERS**

say that Lensveld gave the economy in the region a real boost, both by providing local employment and through the projects it helped complete. As a new decade approached, Lensveld as a carrier had truly become a household name.



The first major transport, with an International from WWII, circa 1960.



Heavy transport, 1960s.

VII

FRESH BLOOD



1970 - 1980

From left to right: Harry and Jan Lensveld,
Tom van Herk and Mr Delfos, 1975.

FRESH BLOOD

TOM

In the early 1970s, it was time for J. Lensveld & Zonen to take stock. The strong growth the company had experienced in recent years, had brought along new problems that needed to be faced. The company now had five departments, led by a department head; positions held by Leen, Cees, Mari and Harry. The general management was in the hands of Jan Jr. In addition to the five brothers, a Mr A. Schinkel and Mr W.D. Delfos had joined the company directorate. With the rapid growth and the large variety of activities the company deployed, J. Lensveld & Zonen was now in need of more professional management. The drivers needed a clear point of contact and the overlapping activities required efficient communication. As a first step in the right direction, a secretariat and a committee for the promotion of drivers' interests were set up. Additionally, new staff was recruited. However, the brothers realised that the company required more: they started looking for a man with the relevant know-how.



Tom and Joke's wedding anniversary, 9 July 1971.

GIANTS TAKE TO THE ROADS

On 7 February 1980, the Daily Mail reported on a very special ferry transport under the header "Giants Take to the Roads".

"Dutch Transport manager Hans Romsom (right), delivers the massive two section pressure tank, to Bill Townhill, his partner in the joint enterprise. Bill Townhill is now completing the delivery to Ellesmere Port, Liverpool. Two specially-built juggernauts rumbled out of Hessle today with the longest load to go by road to the West Coast. Each lorry carried one half of the massive 215 ft-long, 43-tonne pressure tank used at oil refineries. The operation is unique in many ways. The steel tank weighing about 300 pounds was the longest load to be transported by road from Hull to the West Coast and the longest ever carried by North Sea Ferries. And never before have a Dutch and Hull-based haulage firm co-operated so closely on an enterprise. Planning the joint operation between Pinefleet Ltd., in Hull, and Elvex BV, in Vlaardingen, The Netherlands, took three months."



Bill Townhill and Hans Romsom.

Tom van Herk had just graduated as a business economist from Erasmus University in Rotterdam when, in 1971, he married Joke. Joke, also aged 23, was the youngest daughter of general manager Jan Jr. and his wife Johanna. During his studies he had interned at various different companies, but he did not yet have a preference for any one specific sector. Jan saw potential in the quiet, thoughtful Tom and started gauging his interest in joining the family business. He realised that without his daughter's approval, getting Tom involved would be out of the question, so he made sure to consult her first. Her opinion on the matter was clear: "Here's the thing, dad: I stand by my husband, so I'm going to stay out of it on the business side of things. If Tom does something wrong, he's the one you talk

to." Jan gave her warning due consideration, but he also knew that - whatever happened - they would always be able work it out. Meanwhile, Tom had become more and more interested in the company, and so, in November 1971, he joined the family business as managing director. For the following fifty years, he would play a crucial role in the continuation and expansion of the company.

ESTABLISHING J. LENSVELD & ZONEN B.V.

On 30 March 1971, 50 years after its establishment, V.O.F. J. Lensveld & Zonen was converted into a public limited company and would continue under the name J. Lensveld & Zonen N.V., with the five brothers as shareholders and Jan Jr. as its



A Lenveld truck, early 1970s.

legal representative. Under "profession", it no longer read "merchant" but rather "forwarding agent." Sixteen months later, another visit was paid to the notary. Sixteen months later, on 6 July 1972, another visit was paid to the notary and the "N.V." was converted to an "B.V." (private limited company). This meant that company shares were no longer freely transferable. At the time, the value of the company shares was 10 million guilders, which was divid-

SIXTEEN MONTHS LATER, ANOTHER VISIT WAS PAID TO THE NOTARY

ed into 10,000 shares valued at 1,000 guilders each. The business activities were described as: "the operation of the transport and forwarding business, both domestically and internationally; the trade in sand, gravel, road building materials and concrete mortar; the operation of the contracting business, the rental of lifting equipment, earthworks and other equipment [...]."

LENVELD REACHES 30 MILLION!

In 1975, J. Lenveld & Zonen was put in the limelight by the insurance company Transvemij. Since its establishment, the company had shown an ever-increasing turnover. In 1964, the company reached its first million guilders in premiums. Five years later, it exceeded the 10 million mark. In 1975, J. Lenveld & Zonen reached 30 million in premiums. Several representatives from Transvemij, including Mr Van Donkelaar, managing director Horst and director Ad Bos, came to Vlaardingen to help celebrate this milestone. Jan Lenveld received a certificate, a commemorative plaque, flowers and a little surprise...



Even a milestone premium has been paid: managing director Horst had put the payment slip in the bag he presented as a gift to Jan Lenveld. This surprise caused quite some amusement. From left to right: managing director R.A. Horst, Jan Lenveld and director A.C. Bos.

ZOOMING IN ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS

As a newly-graduated young manager, Tom joined an established company that had existed for many years. From day one, he set to work on bringing some structure to the business operations. He enlisted the help of a Mr J. Poot to perform a thorough examination of the company from a financial and organisational point of view. The report drawn up by Mr Poot indicated that the company had undergone some "stormy developments" since 1956 but that it was "now one of the largest transport companies in the Netherlands." On 1 May 1972, the fleet consisted of 70 trucks and tipplers, 15 excavators and bulldozers and no fewer than 100 skip containers. The profit development was described as "spectacular," with 1966 and 1969 being the company's golden years. However, Poot also noted that profits were decreasing, identifying 1971 as a turning point. That year, a loss of around 350,000 guilders was incurred for the first time, and Mr Poot expected a similar deficit in 1972. Making the company profitable again would require "vigorous measures." The recommendations he made mainly concerned reorganisation of management and administration. The outward unity was solid, but within, the company was too much an organisation of individuals, lacking hierarchy. A clear policy, investment and budgeting plan ought to be put in place; a plan for the future, as well as an elaborate plan for the personnel. Mr Poot also listed the company's strengths: entrepreneurial spirit and daring, great

manpower, solid equipment, excellent service, solidarity, customer-centredness and financial strength. All opportunities for further growth, but it was time for a shift in company culture. In order to seize these opportunities, things had to change.

1971 IS A TURNING POINT. THAT YEAR, A LOSS OF AROUND 350,000 GUILDERS WAS INCURRED FOR THE FIRST TIME

A MASTER STROKE

Tom faced an impossible task. The company was not doing well; if the downward trend continued much longer, Lenveld would have to file for bankruptcy. But then, news from an unexpected source saved the day. Tom's father-in-law, Jan Jr., was co-founder and commissioner of the trail-



er rental company CETEM (Container en Trailer Exploitatie Maatschappij) in which Lenveld & Zonen - like many other carriers - owned company shares. Tom heard that a large-scale party was interested in purchasing CETEM. He had to act quickly. Without hesitation, Tom called all his fellow carriers and asked them to sell their company shares to Lenveld. They understood the situation and cooperated. The buyer contacted him when Lenveld owned 50 percent of all company shares.



Just in time, Tom managed to prevent the company from going under by selling half its shares. Lensveld & Zonen was saved by Tom's master stroke.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS

With the emergence of concrete plants, the demand for sand and gravel declined. At the same time, housing construction in Vlaardingen and non-residential construction in the Europoort area had virtually ground to a halt. That meant that the sand and gravel trade and contracting, two branches that had once been pillars of the company's growth, were now much less profitable. In a 1972 report on the spread of the company's profits, the author - heavy-heartedly, it seems - drew the following conclusion: "It is al-

most unbelievable that modern machines like draglines have not contributed more to the current profits; only 4%. What is more, there is no prospect of growth. In both 1970 and 1965, only 4% of the profits were attributable to draglines. In 1968 and 1969, they even caused loss." The closing line of the report poses the question: "Is there no future for the draglines?"

The demand for transport, however, continued to grow. Not so much in the surrounding area, but outside of it and across the border. Since 1965, international transport had shown spectacular growth and the prospects were good. In the years to come, J. Lensveld & Zonen would, in addition to domestic transport, focus on expanding transport abroad.

Hans Romsom

Cees Punselie, managing director of Shipping & Logistics in Vlaardingen:

"We used to have Hans Romsom working here with us. He managed the logistics department. Hans was someone with an incredible amount of knowledge. He knew by heart how deep, wide and tall each container was and what it could contain. If you said to Hans: 'I have this supplier coming to deliver a plate, but I don't know how heavy it is,' you'd only have to mention the dimensions and Hans would be able to tell you exactly how heavy that plate was going to be. He had a great deal of factual knowledge and was also just an incredibly nice guy. He was great at talking to the customers and was very theatrical on the phone. But he was also a real character. Hans loved to go out and smoke a cigar. He did that with a certain flair. The moment he picked up that cigar, it was as if he was no longer at the office. His head would start to hang low and he'd stride down that long corridor, completely in his own world. With the cigar already in his mouth, he would walk right past you, rubbing his hands, hearing nothing and seeing no one. He and another colleague had the same car. When the day was done, he could easily spend half an hour by the side of the wrong car, trying to get the door open. He also occasionally bashed into other cars on his way out. He was such a capable, intelligent man, but incredibly absent-minded. Hans was instrumental in the growth of the business and was also involved in the establishment of the first office in Sheerness, together with Tom and Chris Lewin. "He was truly a wonderful man."



Tom van Herk and Hans Romsom.

THE MOVE TO WATERLEIDINGSTRAAT

As the focus shifted to transport, it was necessary to rethink accommodation. The premises and yard at Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat, where Jan and Annetje had started 50 years ago and which held so many memories, no longer met the requirements of modern times. The monumental

THE COMPANY WAS IN URGENT NEED OF MORE SPACE



Founder Jan Lensveld Sr. and his wife Annetje, together with their granddaughters Marianne and Margriet, 1970.

building was outdated, in need of drastic renovation and above all too small. To accommodate the ever-growing fleet, the company was in urgent need of more space and a well-equipped central workshop with adjoining offices. It was clear that this location in the old city centre offered no possibility for the expansion of a modern transport company. In June 1973, J. Lensveld & Zonen relocated to Waterleidingstraat, located on an industrial estate on the outskirts of Vlaardingen. At this ideal spot on the Nieuwe Maas river,

AN ADVENTURE IN THE MOUNTAINS

THE SANTA ROSA MINE, TIERGA

Some stories simply demand to be told. One of them is the story of Salvatore. In the 1990s, he regularly transported cargo from Spain to Belgium. One of those trips, he will never forget. It all started in Cadiz, a port in southwest Spain. Salvatore was assigned to pick up cargo in Tierga, a small mountain village in northern Spain with some 200 inhabitants. On a mountain five kilometres outside the village lay 'La Mina de Santa Rosa de Tierga,' the mine of Saint Rosa of Tierga; his destination.

The mine was used to extract iron ore which, post-oxidisation, was used for the industrial production of pigments in paint, glass, asphalt and steel. Salvatore looked at his road map and noticed a little white path, barely visible, which indicated a route from the nearby town of Zaragoza to Tierga. Salvatore fired up his DAF and set off in good spirits.

Over 900 kilometres down the road, he arrived in Zaragoza. From there, he drove up and down several mountains until he finally reached Tierga. The main street of the village was so narrow that people had to flatten themselves against the wall to let him pass. He arrived at a small square with a tavern. It was time for a break: have a coffee, eat a sandwich and ask for directions.

"Amigo," Salvatore asked the Spaniard who served him, "buenos días. ¿Dónde está la Mina de Tierga?" Where is the mine?

The barman gave him a knowing once-over.

"Seguro. Hollanda por Bélgica. You go straight on - but watch out: the road is full of potholes and is very narrow. Very, very narrow." The barman brought his hands very close together to illustrate his point.

"On the right-hand side you'll see a big, half-crumbled medieval castle. Chickens roam free there, flying in all directions. Drive on. At a certain point, you will get to a little stone building on your left. Past it, you'll see a large, white arrow indicating 'Mina de Tierga' and that's where you go into the forest."

"The forest?"

"Yes, into the forest. Follow the tracks of those who have gone before you. Once you come out of the forest, you will find yourself in a deserted, bright red village."

Salvatore was confused. Bright red? Hang on a minute - iron peroxide... open mines: it wasn't impossible.

"At some point," the barman continued, "you will make a sharp turn and come to a wooden bridge. You will get out there, because you won't trust the bridge, but it is solid. They drive over it all the time. Beware, though: midway across the bridge you'll be over a 200-metre drop, with a river running down below."

This sounds like madness.

"Across the bridge, the road takes a steep climb. On the right you'll have a precipice with no guardrail, on the left you'll have a mountain wall. Don't forget to fold in your mirrors before you take the road up there. It's narrow. Atop the mountain is where you'll find the mine."

At this point in the story, Salvatore was convinced that he was dealing with a madman, and one with theatrical aspirations at that. He knocked back his coffee and set off. It was just as the barman had indicated: he passed the castle, avoided the chickens, saw the little house with the white arrow and drove on through the forest. Before him lay a ghost town. The church, the houses; everything was flaming red. Salvatore couldn't help but think it looked rather like hell out here.

A little while later, he found himself in front of the bridge. He stopped. A few hundred bleating sheep were blocking the road ahead. Amidst the flock, he spotted an old shepherd with a broad-brimmed pointed hat, flanked by two dogs. Salvatore got out to ask for directions. Just to be sure.

"Hombre, sir ¿dónde está a mina?"

The farmer remained silent. Slowly, he raised his stick into the air, like an elongated arm, to point diagonally upwards towards a mountain peak. Then he departed, taking his sheep with him, and Salvatore could cross the bridge spanning the 200-metre drop.

Before embarking on the last stretch, he folded in his mirrors on the left-hand side. As he skimmed the red rock of the mountain by only a few centimetres, his thoughts ran wild. How was he going to transport 25 tonnes of cargo? It was already getting to late afternoon and at nine o'clock it would be pitch dark. Suddenly, a loader appeared, thundering down the road. Salvatore almost hit the emergency brake. Luckily, the men at the mine had already spotted him and were merely paving the last bit of the way for him. The loader slowly backed up, clearing the way. Salvatore had made it.

The miners were enjoying their siesta. On piles of packaging, cardboard boxes, on the floor; everywhere, men lay asleep, covered from head to toe in bright red dust. Salvatore gave the man who had been driving the loader his order number. He wanted to hurry up. But the man had a different idea.

"You should have a nap first."

"No, no, no, por favor, directamente," pleaded poor Salvatore.

"Why the rush?" asked the red loader driver, who was about to settle down again.

"Why? It's getting dark. We're on the top of a mountain. I wanted to be down there tonight."

The man started laughing. "You can just sleep here, can't you? That's what all your colleagues do. It is much too dangerous to start going down the mountain now. Besides, we have bears."

Bears? Why, yes, of course - just when you thought things couldn't get any worse.

"Forget it," Salvatore insisted, "I want to start loading up. Besides, my colleagues have never been here. They had never heard of this address." He had to get out of there as soon as possible.

The red men shrugged and started loading the lorry. Before setting off on his return journey, Salvatore made sure to pull a tarpaulin over the high pallets and secure it extra tight. He started the engine and drove down the mountain. It got darker and darker. Salvatore had to focus to try and follow his own tracks in the darkness. He decided to put on everything that gave off light: his flashing lights, his main lights and his rotating light. It was now pitch black on the mountainside. A deep, black pit stretched out before him. Every now and then, the rotating light revealed something of his surroundings: the wall, the trees, the mountains. At long last, he caught sight of the wooden bridge. A rush of adrenalin passed through his body. He heard the cadence of his truck over the rickety boards, cadung-cadung-cadung. He held his breath. Once he'd made it to the other side, a huge sigh escaped his lips. He accelerated, turned left, drove past the red ghost town, through the quiet forest, past the house with the arrow and then turned right. For the first time since early afternoon, he could feel asphalt under his wheels again. Salvatore got out and walked around his truck. Everything appeared fine.

In Tierga, he stopped at the pub where he'd planned to spend the night. The door was open and the barman was still manning the tap. Salvatore greeted the Spaniard like an old friend:

"Buenas noches, ahore tiempo de comer. I would love something to eat."

The barman flashed him a polite smile. Was it just his imagination, or was there really something off about that smile? Salvatore felt too much relief to worry about it for long. He wanted to wash his hands. The man pointed him in the direction of the toilet. Salvatore closed the door and switched on the light. A stranger stared back at him from the mirror. Two wide-open, startled eyes in a fiery-red face. Salvatore stared at his own reflection. He was red from head to toe. Bright red. His hands, his hair, his face and his clothes. "Jeez," was the only thing he managed to utter. The pigment was not easily washed or brushed off. The greasy substance seemed to have penetrated deep into his pores.

The next day, Salvatore drove to the first service station he saw to throw away his sleeping bag. Despite having kept the doors closed, the fine dust had crept between the cracks and filled every nook and cranny of his cabin. Like his skin, everything inside was bright red. He arrived at his unloading point in Hoboken, near Antwerp in Belgium, in the middle of the night. On the way, he had stopped several times to shower. That morning there was a knock on the door of his cabin. It is the lady that worked at the truckers' bar. Upon seeing his face, she offered him a shower and breakfast. Over coffee, they got to talking. The lady could tell him exactly where he had been and even exactly how he got there. The cottage, the arrow, the forest, the castle, the bridge and the mountain. Salvatore was flabbergasted.

"Have you been there?" he stammered.

"Nope, not once," the lady replied, "But every time a new driver comes in looking like that, we know where he's been. They never come back. First thing they do is call their boss and tell him: 'never again.' You are the first Lensveld driver to come down from Tierga."

And I'll most definitely be the last, Salvatore thought, a faint smile around his bright red lips.



The house at Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat 39a, late 1970s. Vlaardingen City Archives collection.

there was also the possibility for ships to moor at the quay to unload any cargo. The new location was a typical seventies construction: low-built, with large windows on all sides. There was a sizable parking area for the lorries and a fuel pump is to be installed near the garage, to allow for on-premise refuelling.

TWO GOODBYES

Jan Sr. kept his distance throughout the move. Some years prior he had had a small farm built on the Zuidbuurtseweg

road in Maassluis, where, to his great delight, he was able to create a bit of a farm life for himself after all. In his old age, he scurried around each day, tending to his livestock: a few cows, some pigs and a couple of chickens. The last two years of Jan's life were spent in a beautiful flat in the old town centre of Vlaardingen. On 23 June 1974, the founder of J. Lensveld Transportation died at the age of 78, leaving the company in good hands. He could be proud of what he and his family had built.

In that same year, his son Mari decided to retire from the family business and continue on his own with a container



Transport Vlaardingen - Duisburg, 1975.

company and contracting business at the old location. The transition was managed well by Tom, but the goodbye was nonetheless hard on the band of brothers. This was the first time one of them had gone their own way. Unfortunately, Mari wouldn't be able to stay at Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat for very long. The soil was polluted and needed to be

steel manufacturers needed specialised carriers. Lensveld opened an agency there and invested in semi-trailers fitted with hydraulics that could carry large sheets of steel diagonally for transport by road. In addition to this, the company was the very first in the Netherlands to own a 12-metre long, three-axle trailer that could be extended by an additional



Special transport of long pipes.

cleaned up. The monumental building was demolished in 1982 to make way for new development.

GERMANY

Gradually, Tom found his place within the family business. On 24 April 1976, he was appointed managing director at a shareholders' meeting. At this same meeting, father-in-law Jan Lensveld Jr. was appointed president and chairman. A Mr Marcus Schippers had been climbing the ranks from planner to department manager. Tom got on well with the ambitious Marcus. Under Tom's leadership, contacts with the steel industry in Siegenland, part of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, were expanded. In the traditionally iron ore-rich area,

nine metres. In the anniversary issue of the Dutch Organisation for Professional Goods Transport (N.O.B.), Harry Lensveld proudly talked about the fleet under his care: "Of the 87 trucks, we now have 11 Mercedes with engines ranging from 185 to 320 HP. All with an accurate cost registration - every vehicle has a tachograph. State of the art." Towards the end of the 1970s, Lensveld GmbH was established, a private limited company with its head office in Duisburg, Germany; the very heart of the iron industry.



ELVEX

In 1976, the year he became managing director, Tom turned his eye on the UK. The British Isles were not entirely unfamiliar territory to Lensveld. Cargo was regularly transported from Europoort to the UK via North Sea Ferries, but Tom wanted to explore the British market. He contacted Hans Romsom, who at the time was working for shipping company Hudig & Pieters, but also occasionally managed cargo loads for Lensveld. Tom was eager to bring him on board, but Hans was a loyal man. It took a lot of convincing, but eventually he gave in and joined the Lensveld family. 1977 saw the establishment of Elvex Ltd. – an abbreviation of ‘LV Expedition’ – with Hans running the show in Vlaardingen and a separate agency set up in Hull. Elvex was focussed specifically on transport from Germany and the Netherlands to the United Kingdom and vice versa. Trailers without tractor units were ferried across and picked up on arrival for further transport to their final destination, be it in the UK or elsewhere on the European mainland. Fully loaded, the trucks eventually returned to the ferry and the cycle would repeat itself.

By establishing Elvex, Lensveld would lay the foundation for its future success. Whereas other carriers stopped at land and water borders, Lensveld dared look

Elvex trailers are ferried unaccompanied from Sheerness to Vlissingen and vice versa, 1970s.

beyond them. The idea behind this was that everything that arrived at the ports could be assumed to require inland transport. This insight led to the opening of the very first Lensveld office outside the Netherlands, located in Sheerness, UK. This Elvex branch office allowed Lensveld to expand business activities in the UK market. In 1978, Elvex had a fleet of 150 12-metre trailers, a considerable number of which were low-loaders; semi-trailers that are expertly suited to transporting tall, indivisible objects. Of the 65 drivers, the majority went back and forth between Germany and the ferry in Europoort. It is estimated that Lensveld trucks crossed the German border 100 times a week during this time. Towards the end of the decade, Tom and Hans made the acquaintance of Terry Borroughs, owner of Croxson Forwarding in Felixstowe, the UK’s largest North Sea port in the county of Suffolk. The meeting with Terry would mark the start of a years-long close business relationship and friendship between Tom and Terry, which would play a crucial role in the unprecedented UK expansion of the Lensveld company in the years to come.

**TOM WAS EAGER
TO BRING HIM
ON BOARD, BUT HANS
WAS A LOYAL MAN**



“A giant on the road.” Special transport to the UK, 1978.

CEES PUNSELIE - THE NETHERLANDS

“LOGISTICS IS A WONDERFUL WORLD”

WATER CLERK

Cees (63) is the managing director of the Shipping & Logistics department in Vlaardingen. Growing up in Rotterdam, he has always been fascinated by the port. After having attended the Haven- en Vervoersschool (School for Port and Transport management), a four-year vocational training programme, he started working as a harbour master’s assistant at a coaster and charter company. In 1974, Cees was given a company moped because he did not yet have a driving licence. He acted as water clerk and had to drive around the port area, processing vessel documentation. He also carried out various odd jobs for the ships’ crews: from booking flight tickets to making dentists’ appointments. “They asked me to do all sorts of things,” says Cees. Sometimes the tasks were small; a captain once asked him to get some flowers for his wife, who was coming for a visit. “I was also called in the middle of the night once, because they had found 300 kilograms of cocaine on a vessel.”

“YOU ARE GOING TO COME WORK WITH US”

Enjoying the hustle and bustle of the port, Cees made the switch to logistics in 1980. He had worked for the German company Dillinger Huettnerwerke before Tom van Herk asked him to start working for LV at the end of 1999. Cees had applied to another German company at the time, but during their final meeting, when they had already drawn up the contract, Cees kept hearing Tom’s voice in his head: “You are going to come work with us.” He did not sign that contract. Instead, he joined LV on 1 January 2000.

TOWER

Cees has never regretted his decision. “Logistics is a wonderful world,” he says, “you are always searching for solutions and anything and everything goes.” His department was once asked to organise the logistics of a 33-metre tower from Lekkerkerk to Vlissingen. Many factors have to be taken into consideration; the wind force on the Western Scheldt, the lift bridge between Dordrecht and Zwiendrecht, the centre of gravity of the tower, and more. “Everyone thought it would not be possible, but we did it: we transported the tower as it stands, and not laying down. This saved the client a lot of money. It was quite a feat!”

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Cees is a people person, a man who makes personal connections. Now that this is no longer possible, he misses travelling immensely. In 2018 and 2019, he went to the United States for meetings with business relations and colleagues. Success is mainly based on personal connections, he explains. It is one of the ways to stay ahead of the competition. “What you can do is important, but who you know is everything,” says Cees. His colleagues on other continents wholeheartedly agree. LV has global knowledge, but the client ultimately decides who to award their contract to.

This is often determined during informal gatherings. “During a dinner with foreign business relations, you build rapport with people, which helps to seal the deal. Connections and shared experiences lead to orders.”

Cees is proud and happy to have recently celebrated his 20-year anniversary at LV. He will certainly serve for 25 years if not more. In all those years, he could be reached at any time. “I feel like switching off my telephone is not done, but that is one aspect of my work I will not miss when I retire.”

Cees Punselie with his colleague TS Ho in Singapore, 2012.





Transport of a 33-metre tall Helix tower, from Lekkerkerk to Vlissingen.



SHE BEAMS WITH PRIDE

As a young girl, Ans, oldest daughter of Jan Lensveld Jr. could often be found at the Eerste van Leijden Gaelstraat address after school. She loved going there and knew all the drivers and dragline operators by name. The atmosphere was pleasant there. Parallel to the street lay the old line or ropeway, a covered strip 300 metres long, where they used to make nets for herring fishing. In the 1950s, it was used to store Lensveld's sand and gravel. Little Ans liked to play there. The men were happy to share their sandwich with her, or treat her to a biscuit. When the drivers were not playing football "on the strip" with her father and uncles after work, she would sometimes be asked to run errands for them. Gentle giant Frans Giesen was her favourite. "You go and get us some pig's feet at the butcher's," he'd often tell her.

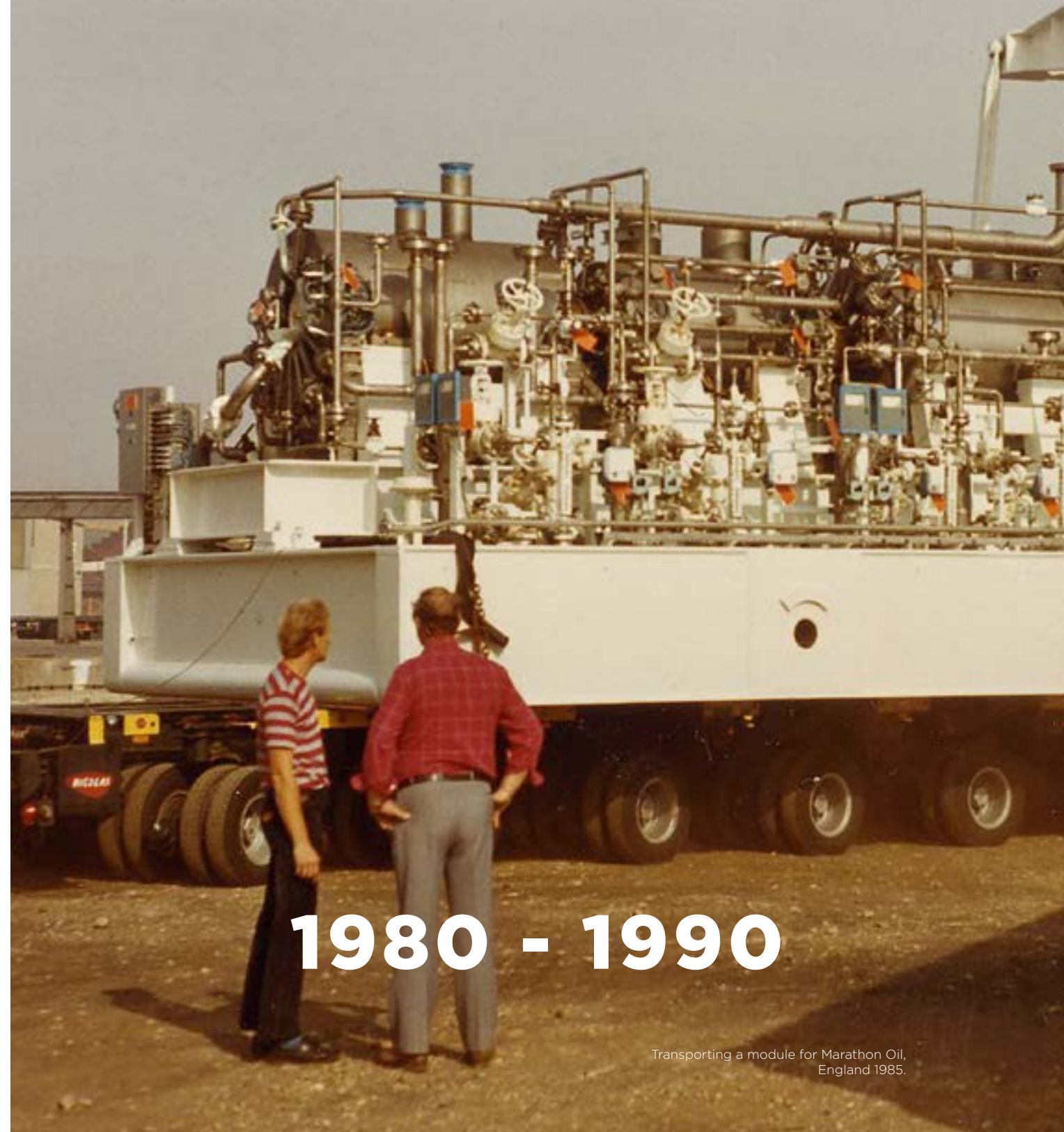
When she got older, Ans wanted to work in the company; perhaps become a driver. But her father said the transport sector is no place for a girl. She went to an all-girls college and became a teacher. Today, Ans is an energetic and cheery 78-year-old lady. Still, whenever she spots a Lensveld

truck driving by with large white lettering across the bright red surface, her heart starts beating faster and she beams with pride.



Ans van Elk - Lensveld, 2021.

VIII OPPORTUNITIES OFF-SHORE



1980 - 1990

Transporting a module for Marathon Oil, England 1985.

OPPORTUNITIES OFF-SHORE

ESTABLISHING LV SHIPPING LTD.

Great Britain, Canada, the United States and the Netherlands, in response to the oil crises of 1973 and 1979, had begun to search for and exploit new oil fields outside the OPEC area. In most Western countries, the sharp rise in oil prices and the limited export of oil to these countries in the 1970s led to economic decline. The West was not going to let that happen again. Soon, new oil fields were discovered in the North Sea, between the UK and Norway. In 1980, the offshore industry was booming and Tom and Marcus wanted to be able to react swiftly to new economic developments. With an eye on future expansion in the UK, LV Shipping Ltd. was founded in 1983. For the time being, the company would exist primarily on paper – but when a new opportunity would arise, LV would be ready.

MARATHON OIL

In the early 1980s, LV had been in contact with the UK branch of a major US oil company: Marathon Oil. The company developed oil and gas fields in the UK parts of the North Sea, and sought to realise four offshore platforms: Brae A through to D. For the logistic management of Brae A, Marathon Oil had contracted Lombard Shipping and Forwarding Ltd. in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire. Lensveld en Zonen B.V. was contracted to handle the logistics on the European mainland.

But the 'golden goose' was secured in 1984: Lensveld B.V. in Vlaardingen was awarded the contract for all transport and shipping activities on the European mainland for the construction of the Brae B drilling platform. The order, worth 15 million guilders, was the largest the company had ever received since its establishment in 1921. In *the Algemeen Dagblad* newspaper of 29 October 1984, Tom van Herk said: "There is actually a good chance that it will be more than 15 million. [...] You never know with the construction of such a gigantic platform. It may well be



Loading a compressor in Le Havre, France, for the Brae A platform, early 1990s.



Tom van Herk in front of a replica of the Brae platform in Houston, 1990.

that there is a lot more to be transported than was initially estimated." Marathon Oil had been pleased with the involvement of Lensveld B.V. in the construction of the first rig. "We did the tail end of the work at the time," Tom explained. "That was a contract of five million. It enabled us to make a name for ourselves, which then earned us the contract for the second rig."

BUT THE 'GOLDEN GOOSE' WAS SECURED IN 1984

BRAE B

The Brae B drilling platform, second in the series of four, would be used for oil production 155 miles northeast of Aberdeen on the British continental shelf and were due to be operational in 1988. The rig would be placed in the 100-metre-deep water and stand 207 metres tall, measuring 72 by 60 metres and weigh-



Transporting a module for Brae B, Marathon Oil, 1985.

ing no less than 58,500 tonnes. The total cost of the project was seven billion. Lensveld was responsible for the transportation of all necessary materials from the suppliers across Europe to the six building sites located in Scotland, England, Spain and Belgium. In Vlaardingen, this meant it was all hands on deck. To be able to carry out the order, six new drivers

and four administrative employees were recruited. The number of semi-trailers was increased by 20 to a total of 155. Besides the use of company equipment, other resources were also deployed. Marcus Schippers in *Rotterdams Dagblad* paper in October 1984: "We arrange all transport, from an envelope to a 60-tonne compressor, by truck, ship or plane."

TWO NEW OFFICES IN ONE WEEKEND

In 1986, Lensveld en Zonen B.V. was one of only two freight forwarders contracted by Marathon Oil for the transport of building materials for the rig. Lensveld was responsible for all activity on the European mainland, while Lombard Shipping Ltd. took care of the logistics within the UK. Rumours had been going around that the British freight forwarder was in financial difficulty. Lensveld played it by ear and quietly applied for the UK contract for Brae B. When the bank seized Lombard Shipping in November 1986, things suddenly moved very quickly. On Saturday 29 November, Tom van Herk, Hans Romsom and Marcus Schippers rushed to London for an emergency meeting with Terry Borroughs of Croxson European Transport in Felixstowe. Croxson Forwarding and Elvex had worked closely together for years, facilitating unaccompanied trailer transport by ferry across the English Channel. The men know they can rely on one another.

In a single weekend, all preparations were made for the take-over of Lombard, including the Brae B contract for all UK logistics. LV Shipping Ltd. had been dormant for three years, but now the time was ripe to breathe life into the company that was founded in 1983.

THE ENGINE ROOM

When Angelique started working in the accounting department in 1987, it was with “a proper hulk of a computer.” Attached was a keyboard with “chatterbox keys.” Moving only the keyboard around was impossible, as the whole computer then had to be moved as well. There was a fax, a telex-machine and telephone calls to the UK were made through the modem. In a separate room there were three large printers with fanfold forms. “If you were printing lists, the noise was immense. This is why we called it the engine room. If someone had left the door open, you’d hear: ‘Close the door!’” The forms went into folders and were stored on rows of shelves. If there was something that had to be looked up, the staff had to lift out all the heavy folders in the search. It often happened that those forms went sailing across the floor.



Angelique Slabbekoorn.
Photo: Katja Poelwijk.

MR CEES AND MR HARRY

“There were several Misters Lensveld, so we called them Mr Jan, Mr Cees and Mr Harry,” says Angelique. This was in a time when you still addressed your superiors with ‘Sir’, rather than their first names. But in this case, to avoid any confusion, it was permitted. Mr Cees always wore checkered English tweed suits in rather bold colours, yellow and green; hunting colours. He often went to England by car to procure rolls of fabric from a tailor, and then had suits made of them back in the Netherlands. “In those days, my colleague and I liked to sew. She, in particular, was very good at it. If he had any leftover lengths, he would walk into the administration office and say: ‘Ladies, would you come with me for a minute?’ and then he’d open the car boot and inside there would be two or three rolls of tweed. ‘Care for some lengths?’ Classic Mr Cees. He was a real gentleman.”

She was in hospital together with Mr Harry. They both had to undergo surgery and were in Erasmus MC in Rotterdam around the same time. They would find each other and would play a card game. For Angelique, it typifies the degree of accessibility of the management. “Mr Harry is still at it. He swings by to pick up B/Ls (Bills of Lading) for us and take them to Rotterdam. He still feels that connection with the company.”



The Waterleidingstraat address, 1980. From left to right: Tom, Mr Cees, Mr Harry, Ad Bos, Neelie Smit-Kroes, Mr Jan.



Tom van Herk, Terry Borroughs and Marcus Schippers in front of the office of LV Shipping Ltd. in Felixstowe, early 1990s.

It would open an office in Felixstowe, on the Croxson premises. Terry Borroughs instantly volunteered to oversee the entire operation and, shortly after selling his shares in Croxson Forwarding some time later, was appointed general manager of LV Shipping Ltd. Croxson would provide temporary staff for the start-up phase of LV Shipping Ltd. in Felixstowe.

THIS WAS THE SIGN MARCUS AND TOM HAD BEEN WAITING FOR

Several other decisions were made that weekend: in addition to the office in Felixstowe, another branch would be established in Middlesbrough. Some of Lombard’s staff already employed in Middlesbrough would be transferred to LV Shipping. One of them was Chris Lewin, Lombard’s office manager.

Earlier that year, Chris had been sent to Duisburg by Bob Wing, managing director at Lombard, to oversee the transport of a crane to Norway. Bob knew that Lensveld had an office in Duisburg and asked Chris to use this as an opportunity to make contact. Tom and Marcus personally travel from Vlaardingen to Duisburg to meet with him. The meeting was fruitful, and soon Lombard and Lensveld start out on a period of collaboration. When in 1986, it appeared that Lombard was having

KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD

Each year, insurance company Transvemij presents awards to dozens of skilled drivers who have been driving damage-free for three, five or ten consecutive years, respectively. It was part of the ‘Knights of the Road’ safety incentive, created to motivate truckers to drive safely.



From left to right: Neelie Smit-Kroes, Harry Lensveld, Jan Lensveld, Aad Molendijk, Cees Lensveld and Tom van Herk, 1980.

Only drivers from participating companies were eligible.

In 1980, Lensveld driver Aad Molendijk was put in the limelight with great ceremony. Accompanied by the Royal Police Brass Band of The Hague, none other than the then Minister of Transport, Neelie Smit-Kroes, pinned the gold medal on the lapel of the 42-year-old driver, who was thus appointed a Knight of the First Class; an honour that was granted to seven other Dutch drivers that year.



Transport for Marathon Oil, 1985.

financial difficulties, Marcus asked Chris to ring him first, should the situation truly become unmanageable. In November of 1986, this is exactly what happens. The phone rang. "Hi Marcus, Chris here..." This was the sign Marcus and Tom had been waiting for. They flew to London for an emergency meeting with Terry Borroughs of Croxson. Together, they then travelled to Newcastle to meet Chris again. This is where Chris also made his acquaintance with Terry, and learned that LV Shipping

Ltd. had been a registered company since 1983. It was at this meeting that the men agreed to appoint Chris the local manager of LV Shipping Ltd., and that his Lombard team in Middlesbrough would also join LV.

In one weekend, Lensveld en Zonen B.V. had suddenly acquired two additional offices and eight new employees. With Sheerness, Hull, Felixstowe and Middlesbrough in the UK, Duisburg in West Germany and the head office in Vlaardingen, Lensveld was now spread out across six locations. For the first time in the company's history, the abbreviation for "Lensveld" appeared in the books; the more internationally palatable "LV."



The North Sea oil fields.



From left to right: Marcus Schippers, Terry Borroughs and Tom van Herk (in the middle).

A NEW STORAGE FACILITY ON THE RIVER TEES

A year after acquiring Lombard and starting two new overseas offices, Marathon Oil awarded LV Shipping Ltd. the contract for organising and managing a new storage site - an onshore buffer store - in Middlesbrough. This

was a supply base for Marathon in a new industrial development area called the Tees Offshore Base. New warehouses and a dedicated wharf were to be built on the 32,000m² brownfield site, to accommodate supply boats. LV would be the only transport company in this new area, which totalled 222 acres, and have exclusive rights to all future stevedoring activities. New staff was recruited to run the warehouse, and by the end of the year LV Middlesbrough would relocate with all its staff to what would become known as LV Teesport. This was a major

TURBULENT TIMES

Chris and his team "set about picking up the pieces from the demise of Lombard." They had taken over the full Marathon contract, as well as several other large orders. What followed was a very successful, but hectic, period for the company. The circumstances were not always ideal. From his office in Felixstowe, Terry kept Chris informed of all developments through memos and letters. Chris has kept them all. In May 1987, six months after the start, Terry wrote: "Working under the current conditions must be very hard [...] Steady growth is the aim of LV in the UK and I know that with your continued support we can all achieve this aim." On 2 September of that year, another one of "Terry's boring memo's" arrives, as they are jokingly referred to by Terry himself. In it, he expresses a heartfelt wish: "Chris and team: you are amazing. Congratulations! I insist that the team stays together. Nobody is allowed to leave. LV is here to stay and the future is good." Terry's words lingered for a long time. Chris' ex-Lombard team from Middlesbrough was at the time comprised of Wendy Nice, Jim Stedman and Colin Davies. All of them make the transfer to LV. Mark Cockerill was hired to join the team as a driver. Some time later, other former Lombard colleagues Bob Wing, Terry Collier and Mike Vickers also joined the LV team. Wendy, Mark, Terry C., Mike and Chris still work at LV today.



Teesport warehouse and office in Middlesbrough.

BOARD POSITIONS AND A MEDAL

Throughout his life, Jan Lensveld Jr. held many board positions. On accepting the chairmanship of Transvemij, he explained: "In this type of function, you are defending the interests of an entire industry, and everyone benefits from that. The only thing is, there have to be people willing to stand up for those interests. I am one of those people." At the age of 25, he was already on various boards of the Dutch Association for Professional Goods Transport (NOB), both at the provincial and national level. These were followed by numerous board positions within the transport sector:

- Board member of transport insurance company Transvemij
- Vice-chairman of the board of Transvemij
- Chairman for the supervisory board of Transvemij
- Member of the board of directors of the Dutch International Road Carriers Organisation (NIWO)
- Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Board of Directors of NIWO, location Rijswijk
- Board member of the Cross-Border Professional Goods Transport Committee (CBG)
- Board member of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) of the GAK (representing employers)
- Chairman of the Rotterdam Association of Transport Operators (RVT)
- Board member of the Vlaardingen Chamber of Commerce
- Commissioner and co-founder of container and trailer rental company Cetem NV
- Chairman of the Association of Land-based Freight Forwarders in Rotterdam

For all this, Jan Lensveld Jr. received the decoration Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau (Knight of the Order of Orange-Nassau) in 1981 from Mr H. de Groot, then director-general of Transport at the Ministry of Transport and Waterways.



Jan receives a ribbon, 1981.
Tom van Herk and Jan Lensveld.



Elvex trailer in England.

operation: six thousand tonnes of material had to be moved from the Haverton Hill and Billingham depots to the new site. The temporary storage area and office required repair and remodelling. The entire Marathon site was fenced off. With its new location on the River Tees, which had direct access to the North Sea, LV had secured a strategic supply base in the Northeast of England.

With the acquisition of the Middlesbrough facility, the Hull office became obsolete. In the second half of 1988, the Elvex office in Sheerness was also closed and its activities were taken over by LV Shipping Ltd. in Felixstowe.

Aberdeen in Scotland was an important port of call, with which Lensveld had maintained a ferry with self-drive service since early 1982. In late 1987, a new LV office was opened in Aberdeen, enabling direct supply to the drilling platforms in the North Sea.

RETIREMENT

While developments in the UK followed in rapid succession, back in the Netherlands, Jan Jr., president and CEO of Lensveld B.V., reached retirement age on 28 June 1985. He formally handed the company over to his son-in-law, Tom van Herk. After 50 years of entrepreneurship, however, Jan found it difficult to take a step back. He had always been on the work floor, never considering the number of

hours he put in; it was more important to be on stand-by for the customer at all times. Lensveld Transport B.V. was his "baby" and Jan would've liked to continue until he turned 100. In an interview with *Beroepsvervoer*, the trade journal published by NOB, Jan himself said: "Of course, when you have always carried a great responsibility for the business you don't just hand that over all at once."

But the constant presence of his father-in-law on the work floor, although well intended, led

to an unworkable situation. "We can't go on like this," Tom told mutual friend and business associate Ad Bos, managing director of insurance company TVM, the former Transvemij. Ad promised to go and talk to his old pal. As a close friend and mediator, he could empathise with both men's situations: "Jan had always



Jan Lensveld as chairman of TVM, 1986.



Jan Lensveld and Johanna Timmermans in 1985.



Jan Lensveld retires as general manager of Lensveld en Zonen B.V. In front: Mark van Herk, Johanna Lensveld. Behind: Jan, Joke and Tom.

SPECIALISED ROAD TRANSPORT

In the mid-1980s, the sand and gravel trade became so unprofitable that this branch of the company was closed for good. This also meant that the last sand hoppers disappeared from Vlaardingen. By then, the company had 125 employees, 80 motor units and 165 semi-trailers. Many employees had already celebrated their 25-year anniversary working for the company, and the sons of mechanics and drivers succeeded their fathers as a matter of course. The work climate and working conditions were good. The family business felt warm, familiar and safe. The management invested in providing the best equipment for their drivers, who were often away from home for long periods on end and had to be able to rely on their vehicles, even in difficult conditions. Vehicles sometimes came equipped with their own cranes for loading and unloading, in case the client did not have access to those. They drive across Germany and Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Italy, from supplier to client or ferry.

IT MUST'VE BEEN AN IMPRESSIVE SIGHT: THE TRUCKS OF LENSVELD TRANSPORT

It must've been an impressive sight: the trucks of Lensveld Transport driving on the German motorway in the dead of night, under police escort with flashing lights. Without the escort of motorised

fought for his business and Tom wanted a chance to prove his worth. Jan was effectively falling into a void, and Tom was getting all the responsibility and prying eyes over his shoulder." It was difficult, but with Ad's help, they managed to work it out. Jan retired, became a consultant for the company and let go of the reins. He did, however, keep his own office; that was non-negotiable. Tom agreed and could confidently follow in his father-in-law's footsteps. The three men, together with their wives, sealed the deal with a trip to Rome. Jan's farewell was celebrated in style, in conjunction with his golden jubilee and 65th birthday. As time went by, Jan became better able to let go of the company.

police and the necessary permits, these trucks, with their capacity for 45-metre long, 65-tonne loads, were not even allowed out on the road. The heavy steel pipes force the drivers to go at a steady pace, but the seasoned men knew what they were doing. In 1988, driver Willem Piek had been working for 21 years and had already covered at least 1.25 million kilometres on the road in "his" DAF. A trucker drives their own vehicle, is careful with it and generally doesn't like any colleagues driving it when they're on holiday. Willem is a knight of the road in heart and soul.

"WHEN THEY COME KNOCKING, YOU MUST BE READY"

Lensveld also had low-loaders: trailers with a lowered loading floor that can be used to transport exceptionally high and heavy objects. The arrival of the container in the 1970s also boosted groupage transport. Combining small loads in containers enables entrepreneurs to have their goods transported efficiently. At this point in time, a Lensveld truck would traverse between 75,000 and 100,000 kilometres annually. Towards the end of the eighties, the concept of 'physical distribution' was starting to gain traction. Increasingly, clients were asking the carrier to take care of all activities in the supply chain. This meant that the carrier would oversee the entire logistics from A to B: from the collection of goods and storage to drop-off and delivery. Many regular customers had a long-standing relationship with Lensveld, some dating back all the way to the company's establishment in the early 1920s. Whether it concerned

RECORD GROMMET SLINGS

VLAARDINGEN — Transport company Lensveld BV in Vlaardingen has recently shipped a number of enormous grommet slings from the terminal in Vlaardingen to Almería (Spain). The grommet slings were shipped from United Rope Works (Verto) in Leiderdorp to Vlaardingen on a pontoon. The Danish coaster vessel *Uno* was chartered for a single trip to Almería by sea. The grommet slings can lift up to 1000 tonnes and are the heaviest in the world. These cables are included in the *Guinness Book of Records*. One cable would be able to lift the '*Uno*'. The grommet slings were transported from door to door by Lensveld for Marathon Oil Ltd., London. The grommet slings will be used offshore to install two modules weighing 2000 tonnes each on the Brae field.



Record-breaking slings. Newspaper photo, from the LV Shipping & Transport Group archive.





“WHEN THEY COME
KNOCKING,
YOU MUST BE READY”



regulars or new clients, transport over land, sea, through the air or by train, Jan Jr.'s motto prevailed: "When they come knocking, you must be ready. Day or night."

STRIKES, 1986

Despite the favourable developments in the UK, the 1986 financial year nevertheless yielded a loss. Substantial investments were made in the vehicle fleet, but freight transport to the UK was in decline due to the plummeting value of the pound sterling. To top it all off, the dockworkers of Rotterdam went on strike. Lensveld was not alone in this sticky situation. The Netherlands was struggling with an economic downturn that affected all sectors. Unemployment was high compared to previous years, and rising. In an attempt to turn the tide, the government, employers' and entrepreneurs' organisations decided to moderate wages in the early 1980s. Halfway through the decade, however, this led to dissatisfaction amongst employees. Throughout the country, workers went on strikes. Supported by the trade unions, they pleaded for a better collective labour agreement. Various companies in the freight transport sector were also facing the threat of staff strikes, and as a major carrier, Lensveld found itself right in the

firing line. While negotiations between the management of Lensveld and the

trade unions were still ongoing, 35 drivers, all members of the company's trade union division, walked out. Too soon, said Tom in response to the strike. He aimed to reach an agreement beneficial to all parties, but he wanted to do so around the negotiating table, and as soon as possible. A day on strike was a day not driven and therefore "a day of malaise" for the company. Management had been so happy with a national collective labour agreement for freight

transport, they had no intention of entering into any individual contracts with the unions. Fortunately, Tom and his right-hand man, Hans Romsom, were able to turn the tide and get the unions back to the table. The parties then soon reached a mutually acceptable agreement and peace was restored.

THE OFFICE ON WATERLEIDINGSTRAAT

Despite recent expansions, the company was still relatively small, compared to what it would become. In the UK, the staff of LV Shipping Ltd., under the leadership of Terry Borroughs and Chris Lewin, was



Loading and unloading at the Waterleidingstraat site.

kept busy with project logistics for the offshore industry. The records for all four offices in Sheerness, Felixstowe, Middlesbrough and Aberdeen were still being kept at the head office in Vlaardingen. In addition to the UK offices, Lensveld also had a branch in Germany.

In 1987, the Netherlands branch had four departments: Lensveld Transport, focussed on the domestic and international freight transport; Elvex B.V.; Container Trucking; and Lensveld Stuwadoors, which focussed on stevedoring. Ships could be loaded and unloaded at the company's own quay on Waterleidingstraat. About 20 people worked at the head office in Vlaardingen. In addition to accounting, with six people, there was the planning department, where two people worked on the domes-

The planning department at the office at Waterleidingstraat, 1980s.

tic and two people on the international planning. One door down was Elvex, with managing director Hans Romsom and two staff members, one further down was the office of Marcus Schippers and his executive secretary, and behind that was general manager Tom van Herk's private office. All the offices opened onto one long, narrow corridor. "If you put a marble down on one side, it would roll right over to the other side, that's how crooked the building was," Angelique recounts. She has worked for the company for 34 years, starting in bookkeeping in 1987 at the age of 18. "At the very end of the hall, there was another office where the former managing director 'Mr Jan' would be, if he was in. Back then, he had not yet been retired for very long."



Spring tide at the Waterleidingstraat site.



J. de Jonge Group personnel on a trailer during high water.

SPRING TIDE

The building on Waterleidingstraat was situated on a higher part of the quay on the Nieuwe Maas river. And with good reason. During a spring tide, the high water would often flow over the walls of the quay, flooding the surrounding area. At least once a month, the harbour authority would call to warn the Lensveld staff of the rising water: they had to leave in time to avoid getting stuck in the office. One time, they were too late. That's when it turned out working for a transport company had its perks. A trailer came to pick

up the staff and take them to dry land, bicycles and all. The reverse also happened: the girls from the office only had to call in on a spring tide morning to hitch a door-to-door ride to the office on a Lensveld truck.

DIESEL ADMINISTRATION

In the 1980s, automation slowly started to gain momentum. Although the first computer had arrived 20 years prior, administration still involved a lot of manual work. For the accounting department, this meant that there was a cashier who handled the cash, the claims and the insurance; a position that no longer exists today. In the door to the accounting office, there was a hatch. When drivers needed money or passes for fuel, they would knock on the hatch and the cashier would open. This is how they communicated with one another.

A tachograph, which kept track of the driving time and speed of the drivers, was already quite an advanced application in those years. The drivers had tank lists on which they manually record when, how much and at which fuelling station they filled up. Diesel was expensive, especially abroad. At certain fuelling stations, the drivers could receive a discount. It was strictly

monitored that the drivers fill up there. Every week, the lists had to be returned and the administration office would calculate the average fuel consumption per lorry. After that, the lists went directly to managing director Tom van Herk, who carefully checked whether fuel consumption fell within the expected margins. Using a pen and paper.

Under the 2.5-hectare site on Waterleidingstraat, there was a huge tank that could store some 40,000 to 50,000 litres of diesel. Once every fortnight, Boudewijn, the site manager, used a dipstick to gauge the amount of fuel left. When it was nearly empty, Angelique would call up the Royal Shell for a diesel refill. At the pump,

there was an automat with a tally roll. This showed which truck filled up, on which day, at what time and how many litres, including the total consumption per truck. Every Monday morning, Angelique went to the machine to read the tally roll. However, when it had rained, the ground was all slippery with oil. For that reason, she kept a pair of rubber boots in her office. "I made sure to put them on before I went out, otherwise the diesel would splatter all over your clothes."

THE TURBULENT '80s

The 1980s were a turbulent time for Lensveld in more ways than one. Winning the contracts for oil conglomerate Marathon Oil and the opening of three new offices in the UK had enabled the com-

pany to expand its service package exponentially. From a family business with a focus on transport, there seemed endless opportunity to develop into a market leader in offshore logistics, specialising in constructing and supplying rigs in the North Sea. At the same time, the management had to find a way to cope with the economic crises at home and subsequent declines in turnover. Tom, Marcus and Hans counted themselves lucky for the excellent cooperation from their British colleagues; it is a relationship that continues to this day.



The vehicle fleet at the Waterleidingstraat site.



CONTAINERS

The arrival of the container meant a giant leap forward in transport logistics. Containers had already been used in the First World War, to transport ammunition to Europe. By the end of the 1920s, the Flemish-Dutch transport company Van Gend en Loos were using wooden containers to transport freight to and from trains. At that time, the British railways also used simple containers. Yet, it was not until 1966 that Europe was introduced to the first Transatlantic container service.

On 3 May of that year, the container ship *Fairland* arrived at the port of Rotterdam. It belonged to the shipping company Sea-Land and was the first ocean-going vessel to transport containers exclusively; it even came complete with its own cranes. The initiative came from US transporter Malcolm Mclean, founder of Sea-Land. In the 1950s, he had already been in search of faster and more cost-effective ways to transport goods between the northern and southern states, experimenting with converted tankers and redundant war fleets as means of transport. When intercontinental container transport started to gain traction in the 1970s, global agreements were made about universal sizes and weights and variations on these. The standard size eventually agreed upon was 20 x 8 x 8 feet, or 1 TEU. For a long time, Rotterdam was the largest container seaport in the world,

but has now been surpassed by ports in China, Dubai and Singapore. With a capacity of 33,370 TEU, Singapore is one of the busiest transit ports in the world. Dubai is home to Jebel Ali Port, the largest port ever built from scratch. LV has local offices in both Dubai and Singapore.



Tom and Marcus on the tail lift of containership Taronia. Early 1990s.

IX EXPANSION

1990 - 2010



EXPANSION

A GUARANTEED FUTURE

In 1991 Tom van Herk, who would pilot the company through rough weather, took over the family business. With this, Lensveld en Zonen B.V. was redubbed LV Holding B.V. Brothers Jan, Cees and Harry transferred their company shares to the new Holding. Cees and Leen had also retired. Leen did manual work and was workshop manager through to his 65th birthday. Harry was employed by the company and Jan entered a period of relative quiet after turning 70, just like LV did. Son-in-law Tom took over, and with that, the future of Lensveld as a family business was assured.



PROJECT FREIGHT FORWARDING AND STANDARD FREIGHT TRANSPORT

For a decade starting from the mid-1980s LV Shipping focussed on the logistics and delivery of parts to the Brae offshore platforms. These were the best years for LV in the UK. Unexpectedly, it came to an abrupt end. Oil prices decreased significantly and the UK offshore projects dis-



appeared. In 1994 LV UK reported a loss for the first time. It was time to change course and explore new markets. LV had acquired significant logistics experience transporting construction material to the Brae offshore platforms in the 1980s, allowing the company to develop into a project specialist. Tom, Terry and Marcus decided to focus on general logistics without throwing their project expertise overboard.

LV Netherlands had many steel industry clients. In the 1990s worldwide freight transport was increasing and shippers required logistics service providers that

BY INLAND WATERWAY, SEA, LAND, AIR OR RAIL.

could take care of all transport-related tasks. Tom and Marcus realised this was an opportunity for LV and reacted to the demand by offering clients comprehensive delivery of their products, by inland waterway, sea, land, air or rail. All projects were different and had to be processed differently. Steel sheets and piping were

THAT TRUCK IS NOT WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Bas (56) has been a driver for Lensveld for seven years now. He is best known by his trucker name 'Rodeodrifter Alba.' Since he was a little boy, when he was allowed to join his uncle for rides in his truck, he knew he wanted to become a lorry driver.

High above the asphalt, where you have a clear view out over the open road, Bas feels like the captain of his own ship. He is very proud of his truck and the work he does. For Bas, it signifies freedom, and carrying the responsibility for your shipments. "Sure, I enjoy working at Lensveld," he says, "and I have great respect for the planners." He mainly carries steel to Odense in Denmark. Not the easiest job. What Bas appreciates about Lensveld is that everyone treats each other with respect. You may disagree sometimes, but you are always free to have your say and you will be heard. Lensveld also takes good care of its staff, as he recently experienced first-hand. On a trip in Denmark, he got into an accident when a Romanian drove him off the road. What Mark and Menno were eager to know, though, was how he was doing. The truck, that wasn't important right now. They had more of those. This mentality touched Bas. As far as he's concerned, Lensveld is an excellent employer, simply because: "at Lensveld, you get what you give."



Bas, known also by his trucker name "Rodeo drifter Alba".



had acquired ample general logistics knowledge and experience. With the new direction LV was taken, these skills came in very handy. Adrian became office manager at the Felixstowe.

When LV Shipping took over Croxson European Transport in 1995, the companies realised that by joining forces they could better capitalise

on new opportunities within the industry and offer multimodal services worldwide. Adrian was asked to set up a standard shipping department. Adrian: "Until then, LV had focussed on projects such as the construction of offshore platforms; long-term assignments. This type of projects yielded large rewards. When the offshore projects dried up, they had very little to fall back on. The head office in Felixstowe had to expand their range. That is what we were tackling first. We wanted to ensure this location also became profitable." The plans meant Chris was given more responsibility: he became a member of the Board of directors in 1996.

REORGANISATION IN THE UK

Diversifying activities and spreading risks provided results. Slowly but surely, Adrian and his team acquired more clients, resulting in the opening of offices in Rainham, Tilbury and Southampton in 1997. In the second half of the 1990s LV worked on several interesting projects, for which Chris was responsible.

A PROJECT IS LIKE A ROLLERCOASTER, IT HAS ITS UPS AND DOWNS

"It is the icing on the cake," says Chris. "A project is like a rollercoaster, it has its ups and downs. The general freight transport activities balance out the workload. Having such a wide a variety of business activities is great."

TERRY BORROUGHS

At the turn of the century LV was in good shape. In the UK, the company had made a remarkable recovery. LV Shipping had become a mature organisation. Chris: "Tom's leadership helped move the company to



Adrian French.



The construction of the Felixstowe office, 1991. From left to right: Chris Lewin, Terry Borroughs and Marcus Schippers.



Marcus and Tom in Thailand, 1994.



Tom en Marcus and Malaysia, 1994.

TOUR OF MALAYSIA, INDONESIA AND THAILAND (1994).

WORKING VISIT GERMANY (1983) AND HOUSTON, TEXAS (1993).



Marcus, Chris en Terry in Siegenland, Duitsland, 1988.



Tom, Terry and Marcus in Houston, early 1990s.



Tom and Marcus in Thailand, 1994.



Marcus, Terry and Tom in Singapore, 1994.



Marcus, Tom and Terry on the Island of Batam Indonesia, 1994.



Tom, Marcus and Terry in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1994.



a much higher level. A much-needed development. The old, established company needed to reinvent itself. Tom and Marcus made that happen.”

Just when everything was starting to fall into place, Terry passed away unexpectedly on 5 December 2000. It was a great shock to everyone at the company. Terry was one of the driving forces for establishing LV in the UK and, as general manager, was closely involved in all developments. Everyone was devastated by the sudden loss. Adrian remembers his friend and colleague fondly. “Terry was very well liked and loved. He was a warm, easy-going person. We greatly liked working for him. He gave us space and encouraged us to build something real.”

TERRY'S DEATH WAS HARD ON TOM AND MARCUS, THE THREE HAD BEEN VERY CLOSE

Terry and his team on an outing in 1991. In the back: Tom and Marcus.

the staff in a letter how much the loss affected him. “During the past 14 years, he played an enormous role in building up this company to what it is today. The void he leaves behind will be impossible to fill. But as Terry always said: ‘I am not the one responsible for the success of this company, it is the result of the wonderful team of people working here. It is their success!’”

GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS

Terry's death was a major turning point. With him gone, others had to take over the management of LV UK. Work was calling and decisions needed to be made. Chris took over Terry's tasks and became general manager for the UK and Adrian became the Felixstowe manager. They decided to divide the tasks. From Middlesbrough Chris would take control of project forwarding for the Northern region, while Adrian would focus on shipping in the Southern region from Felixstowe. This distribution of responsibility and application of the specialist knowledge of both men in their own area of expertise meant LV was able to get back to business. The intensive contact with Chris and Adrian meant that Tom and Marcus spent a lot of time in the UK.

EFFORTS REWARDED

With the full support of the management back in the Netherlands, Adrian's Felixstowe team was quickly able to make the branch profitable. Adrian flew to China, Malaysia, Japan and Korea to set up international business relations and



Middlesbrough office in the 1990s. Terry Collier and Terry Borroughs (on the phone).

Terry's death was hard on Tom and Marcus, the three had been very close. A few days after Terry's passing, Tom told



At the back from left to right: Mike Fryer, Derek Nicol, Kevin Walsh, Tom van Herk, Colin Harrison, Adrian French, Lee Woolams, Chris Lewin, Suresh Joseph, Andy Willis-Betts. In front from left to right: Colin Ainsley, Wendy Nice, Setti Darab, Eric Zoetmulder, 2011.

network with freight forwarders. More and more foreign companies found their way to LV Shipping Ltd. Containers from Southeast Asia and India arrived in the United Kingdom. LV took care of distribution and customs documentation. The new service added value to LV, attracting larger international clients. Meanwhile, Chris also travelled the world to investigate opportunities to open new branch offices and to enter into project contracts. The work of the team under Chris and Adrian led to the establishment of four new branch offices in the UK between 2000 and 2002: Newcastle, Liverpool, Immingham and Heathrow.

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ENGLAND

Felixstowe and Middlesbrough were the two head offices in the UK. “These are the two main engines of LV in the UK,” according to Chris. Felixstowe because of the large volume of goods that were processed and Middlesbrough because of the variety of operations in the area and in Newcastle: storage, truck transport, packaging for export and transport over land, sea and by air. On paper, there was a difference between the volume of activities in northern and southern England, but it was not clear cut. Chris and Adrian always tried to have freight transport activities at every branch office, as well as sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to handle large, hugely profitable projects. This way of working was slowly implemented throughout the years. “The northern and southern offices have always been a little competitive,” says Adrian. “Nothing

wrong with that. Chris and I have always emphasised that every office is equally important and valuable. Everyone contributes in their own way towards our success.”

SAOEDI-ARABIA

When the North Sea offshore industry no longer provided enough work, LV management started looking into other oil industry regions. The first exploratory contacts in the Middle East took place around 1995 when Terry Collier, current Projects Director, and Chris Lewin went on a business trip to Aramco in Saudi Arabia, the largest oil producer worldwide. However, it was not until 2007 that LV finally spread its wings towards Saudi Arabia. In that year, LV established a joint venture with Al Khodari Sons, a logistics service provider in Al Khobar, near Dammam on the Persian Gulf.

Nazar Al-Saif was made general manager of Al Khodari Sons & LV Shipping Logistics Ltd. Fourteen years ago, he was asked to manage LV's business activities in the Middle East. He is responsible for the LV Shipping office in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates as well as the Dammam office where eight employees work. One employee is stationed in Jeddah to handle business operations in situ.



These offices also work on a combination of project freight forwarding and standard shipping, Nazar explains. From his office in Dammam, he overlooks his working area on the Persian Gulf, the centre of the Saudi Arabian oil industry, buzzing with activity. Although the work slowed down during the pandemic, project freight forwarding has been picking up again lately. That means the whole

Chris Lewin and Terry Collier visiting Aramco, Saudi Arabia, 1995. (Standing, fifth and seventh from right).

together like a close-knit family. The work is not passed on to someone else, everyone does what they have to do and takes over tasks when necessary. There is no hierarchy.”

An LV employee is always physically present during the fulfilment of assignments in Saudi Arabia to ensure everything is carried out professionally. Irrespective of location; be it port, warehouse or workshop. One colleague drives back and forth between the port and the workshop to help out where needed. The contact with other LV offices is good. Cultural differences exist, but “where the work is concerned, we all speak the same language,” says Nazar. Nazar states that what differentiates LV Shipping from other companies is staff commitment,



Chris Lewin, Mohammed Eshrath (Sales Director), Nazar Al-Saif and Eric Zoetmulder during a desert tour in Dubai, 2017.

team works from 06.00 AM to midnight, seven days a week, to complete the tasks at hand. It is part of the job and requires teamwork, Nazar believes. “We work



Nazar Al-Saif.

teamwork and – most importantly – the management’s engagement with daily business.

LARGE PROJECTS RETURN

Large projects returned in the first decade of the 21st century. Not only offshore project but onshore ones as well. In 2008 LV Shipping was responsible for supervising the logistics of a large exploration ship building project and the logistics management of an offshore wind farm in the North Sea. LV opened an office in the resort town of Great Yarmouth on the east coast of England to coordinate these projects.

GROWTH IN THE NETHERLANDS

The head office in the Netherlands also grew during this period. Lensveld was not only a carrier and stevedore, but also a freight forwarder. A shipping agent branch was added to the list in 2001, followed by the department “Transport of sea containers by road” in 2005. Traditional transport by road, the first service provided by Lensveld, was added to the Lensveld Transport department in 2005.

THE FIRST DECADE OF THE NEW CENTURY LV RAN SMOOTHLY

LV Holding employed 170 people in 1999: 85 in the Netherlands, 70 in the UK and 15 in other countries. Three years later, it counted more than 200 employees, as indicated in an article in *IKV Nieuws* (a magazine on Industry in Vlaardingen). The company had 25 tractor units available in the Netherlands and another 15 in the UK, 11 tippers, 79 semi-trailers for Lensveld Transport and 70 trailers for unaccompanied transport between Germany and the UK. During the first decade of the new century LV ran smoothly. 2010 was just around the corner. It would prove to be another year of expansion for LV.



Loading and unloading general cargo at the Vlaardingen quay.

LA FAMIGLIA

Salvatore (67) was born in Italy and came to the Netherlands for love in the 1970s. He married, started a family and stayed there. As a little boy, he had wanted to become a policeman, but things turned out differently: he became a driver instead.



He initially worked at some other carriers before starting at Lensveld in 1992. He retired in 2020, after almost 30 years of service. Salvatore has not lost his Italian temperament. He talks passionately about his career at Lensveld. "In terms of work ethic and mentality, I am a Dutchman," he tells us. In Italy, they view work quite differently. The attitude of tackling the problem head-on and seeing it through is something he learned here. "That, in combination with that fiery Italian passion – I was a pitbull," he explains with a grin. He remembers his job interview with managing director Tom van Herk like it was yesterday. "That man could judge a person's character within two seconds. He told me: 'I'd like to welcome you on board, but there's one thing I ask of you: loyalty.' So I said, 'that is what you will get with me.' And so he did."

Among drivers, it is known: if you are with the same employer for a long time, it means that company is a good one. "Everyone at LV had a long-standing service," Salvatore says. Relationships are different in a family business. Mutual trust is the key. "Look at it this way: when you come to work for LV, you say: 'I work at la famiglia.' It really feels like that." He experienced the impact of that mutual trust first-hand when he was getting divorced and going through a rough time. Salvatore was devastated and almost unable to carry out his transportation work. It was then that he noticed the value of working at a family business. "The management told me: 'You go home and you don't come back until you feel a bit more like yourself again.'"

LV Shipping Ltd. leased a helicopter to take a faulty part from an oil rig off the coast of Aberdeen to the mainland, where an LV Shipping truck was waiting to transport the part to the Netherlands for repair.

PROJECT FREIGHT FORWARDING



FROM THE VERY START OF LV SHIPPING LTD. IN 1986 AND ITS FIRST CONTRACT FOR MARATHON OIL TO SIX YEARS LATER, IN 1992, THE UK COMPANY HAD GROWN TO EMPLOY 100 PEOPLE SPREAD OUT ACROSS ITS OFFICES IN FELIXSTOWE, MIDDLESBROUGH, ABERDEEN AND SHEERNESS. THE COMPANY ALSO HELD TWO DISTRIBUTION CENTRES AT THE TEESPORT COMMERCE PARK, WHERE THE OIL RIG PARTS WERE STORED. IN 1990, THE TEESPORT WAREHOUSE ALONE WAS MANNED BY 25 PEOPLE. IT WAS AN EXCITING TIME.





Sea transport of a helideck for Cygnus.





Workshop of the Cygnus project, between 2012 and 2017.

PROJECT SPECIALIST

In the early 1990s, LV Shipping was one of the top three project forwarders to work in the North Sea oil sector. But managing the logistics of transporting equipment and parts across continents was by no means an easy feat. An oil platform is constructed from modules, which were made and assembled by specialist companies in the UK or on the European mainland. LV was responsible for the transport of all materials and parts from the suppliers to the factories. Once the factories had made these into modules, LV was also in charge of their transport to the rigs.

First, the method of transport was determined; by land, sea or air, depending on the size of the object. By the time a project neared its completion, an average of 15,000 to 30,000 objects and materials had been moved.

In project forwarding, planning is vital. A tight schedule is maintained, one day to the next. In 1992, only two cranes worldwide were capable of lifting and positioning the enormous modules onto the rigs. The hire of such cranes cost £500,000 per day and they could only be taken to the assembly point when the sea was calm.

WINNING THE CONTRACTS

Millions were involved in the offshore industry. Contracts were put out to tender

for forwarders to bid on. It was Robert (Bob) Wing, the former manager of Lombard Shipping, who had made the initial contact with Marathon Oil in the 1980s and won those contracts. "Without Bob, there would be no LV Shipping - no doubt about it," says Terry Collier, project specialist and current Project Director. "LV owes a lot to Bob."

When, in the years that followed, new requests for offshore projects submitted to its UK counterpart, LV had to compete for the contracts. Cees Punselie, head of the Shipping & Logistics department at the head office in Vlaardingen, remembers well how in 2012 a delegation of LV Netherlands flew to the UK for a bid clarification meeting with a client in London. This was about the Cygnus project, from Gaz de France, for the construction of four gas rigs in the North Sea. In a London hotel, the company, including Tom, Cees, Terry Collier and Chris, met two days before the presentation to prepare for it. Everything was thoroughly explained and discussed from beginning to end. At the end of the day, the group of eight turned in feeling exhausted but confident. Cees: "The next morning at breakfast, someone said: 'I've been mulling it over once more, and I really think we ought to do it like this...' So, at the very last minute, we were still making alterations to that presentation. Three companies were competing for the con-



The Cygnus platforms, 2015.

tract, so there was a lot at stake. These were contracts might last three to four

WITHOUT BOB, THERE WOULD BE NO LV SHIPPING NO DOUBT ABOUT IT

years, of which the turnover could go into the tens of millions. One mistake could cost the company a lot of money. Project manager at Gaz de France, Brian Watts, was there when LV presented their plans. He would later go on to tell his colleague Dick Everton, one of the best oil and gas procurement specialists LV would ever work with, that everyone in the room was utterly blown away with the presentation LV gave that day. Dick: "Brian said it was superb, absolutely brilliant. Exactly what we needed to hear." Needless to say, LV was awarded the contract.

"It was a thrill just to think that all the knowledge and experience of that team and the time spent preparing ultimately



Harry Lensveld and Dick Everton, 1990s.

helped us win the project," says Cees. But that wasn't all. "Contacts are very important in our sector," says Cees. One of those contacts was Dick Everton. "We owe a lot to him. He was never our client, but has recommended us many times. He's a wonderful man with an extraordinary amount of experience within the industry." People like Dick and Brian are important. They know the clients, they know LV and when it comes down to it, their recommendation can be the deciding factor.

A COG IN THE GREAT MACHINE

There was a lot of competition in the project forwarding industry and at the time, LV Shipping was certainly not the biggest freight forwarder. But LV did set itself apart from the big boys through teamwork by working with small, well-attuned teams in which everyone brought their unique know-how and skill to the table. LV is an organisation with a horizontal structure and short lines of communications, which means any problems can be dealt with quickly and efficiently. "We're all a cog in the great machine," says Cees. "If one cog breaks, the whole thing shuts down. That's why collaborating is so important. We're in it together. There isn't a single person more important than another. Everyone in the industry knows that, if a project is to succeed, teamwork is the most vital element.

It was this utter dedication of the staff that makes Dick Everton come back to LV time and time again, as a project man-

A GREAT SMALL MAN

For years, Tom, Terry and Marcus were inseparable. They took decisions together and travelled the world together. Terry and Tom click from the start and become best friends. Looking back on the relationship between the two men, Joke, Tom's wife, says: "They had a lot of contact on the phone, but Tom also travelled a lot. First by ferry, and later by plane. They had a whole schedule of who had to be visited when and at which offices. Terry was such a nice man. They only needed one letter to know what the other meant. They were entirely attuned to each other."

Terry was not large in stature. Dutchmen Tom and Marcus, on the other hand, were. It must have been a funny sight, the three men together, with Terry walking in the middle. In one of the newsletters that regularly came out in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s, Terry reported on a business visit to Houston, where LV Shipping was at the OTC (Offshore Technology Conference) in 1993. The OTC is a trade fair for companies working in the offshore industry to present their products and services. Owing to his short stature, Terry was often mistaken for a celebrity. "A lot of people in America seem to think I look like Dudley Moore. One man chased me through a hotel lobby in San Diego, pulled up his shirt and demanded I signed his back." He adds: "I fled."

But it is not because of his height that Terry lives on in the memories of all those who knew him. He was a breezy man and a real people person. It was his philosophy of trust that made a real impression. Adrian: "Terry always used to say to me: 'LV believes in giving people an opportunity. And it is what you do with the opportunity that matters. When you've got an idea, go and try. If it doesn't work, we'll look at it.' He would never say: 'I wish you hadn't done that.' He would always encourage you to have a go to make something happen. That was his philosophy: trust is important."



Marcus, Terry and Tom on site at Marathon Oil in Houston, Texas.



Transporting a module for Cygnus.

ager and as a purchaser. Dick had become acquainted with LV through earlier projects and had instantly felt confident about the way the team handled projects. This was because LV ensured that there was always someone on-site in the client's office to coordinate all shipments on behalf of LV. For the Cygnus project, this person was LV forwarder Setti Darab. She was, and still is, one of the few women working in the industry. In any trouble arose, she was always available. For the duration of the Cygnus project,



Phil Gerrick, Setti Darab and Terry Collier, Singapore, 2013.

which spanned five years, Dick worked closely together with her. "She was the one arranging all the transport from our office," he recounts. Dick admired the relentless energy Setti put into in her work. She was always at the ready, always sharp, available day and night and had great problem-solving skills.

REWARD

Project freight forwarding is not easy. It demands a lot from generally quite small teams working six to seven days a week, often for years. "But it is also exciting, challenging, never boring and the rewards are usually great," says Chris, who is of closely involved in all projects in the UK as a project specialist. For his son Jonathan, it's one of the best work experiences he's ever had. He started working for LV in 2012 and joined the Cygnus project team, with which he spent 18 months. He learned all the ins and outs of project forwarding from some of the best in the industry, including Terry Collier, whom Jonathan describes as having a "marvelous projects brain."

LV WAS HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE CLIENT AT AN AWARDS DINNER

For their exceptionally dedicated service during the construction of the Britannia-B drilling rig in 1993, LV was highly commended by the client at an awards dinner. This was because, at the start of the project, Greenpeace had threatened to occupy the rig. The client decided to leave a small team on site to prevent this from happening. The LV team in Aberdeen, together with Dick, worked day and night to gather everything the group may need for their stay on the platform. Food, electricity and other provisions are brought to the rig in small containers by helicopter. With the help of LV, an occupation by Greenpeace was prevented.

BOOM OR BUST

These days, the construction of offshore platforms is in sharp decline. Wind farms and other green energy projects are taking their place.

The periods of uncertainty - when it was “boom or bust,” as Adrian puts it - with projects in the offshore industry, are now also becoming a thing of the past. Having built solid foundation for the company through its stable mix of logistics activities, LV is no longer dependent on the project market. When a nice project does come along, it is simply the cherry on the cake. Larger projects are always welcome.



Bob Wing celebrating his retirement.

A SPECTACULAR OPERATION

Lensveld did not shy away from jobs. In 1993, the company chartered the largest transport plane in the world to carry out a “very heavy and complicated transport” to Perth, Australia, for a client. Daily newspaper *Groot Vlaardingen* reported on this on Tuesday 21 September 1993 under the headline “Lensveld Coordinates World Record”:

“Last Monday, a Russian Antonov 124-100 departed from Schiphol Airport carrying the largest air cargo (in one part) ever transported. The Vlaardingen-based company Lensveld B.V. was closely involved in this new world record in commercial aviation.

The cargo consisted of a hydraulic machine weighing 130,000 kilos and measuring 20 metres in length. In addition,

over 13,000 kilos of material was required to properly load and secure the colossus.

Project forwarder Lensveld Transport from Vlaardingen coordinated this spectacular operation. The machine had to be transported by road from IJsselstein to Schiphol on Monday morning under police escort. The final destination of the gigantic cargo is Perth, Australia.”



“THEY WERE BOTH WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD FOR TVM”



THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE IN THE TRANSPORT AND INSURANCE SECTOR WHO WILL HAVE NEVER HEARD OF HIM: AD BOS, FORMER MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TVM – THE DEDICATED INSURANCE COMPANY FOR PROFESSIONAL FREIGHT TRANSPORT. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, TVM (FORMERLY TRANSVEMIJ) GREW INTO THE LARGEST TRANSPORT INSURANCE COMPANY IN THE NETHERLANDS. IN 2001, HIS SON ARJAN BOS TOOK THE HELM. IN THE 20 YEARS SINCE BECOMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, HE HAS BECOME THE FACE OF TVM. TOGETHER, FATHER AND SON LOOK BACK ON THE UNIQUE BOND BETWEEN TVM AND LV GROUP, AND WITH JAN AND TOM IN PARTICULAR.

FACING THE STORMS TOGETHER

When Ad Bos joined Transvemij as deputy director in 1972, Jan Lensveld Jr. – as representative of a major carrier and one of the initiators of the insurance company – was a member of the board. Four years later, Bos became managing director of TVM and in 1981 Jan became chairman. Right from the start, the men got on well. The miller's son and the Zeeland-native shared a love of the sea. Together with their families, they spent many a day on Jan's boat, sailing along the Dutch islands. But in terms of management, the men were also very much on the same wavelength. As managing director, Ad was



Jan Lensveld and Ad Bos.

often faced with difficult decisions, but he felt supported by Jan in all respects. If there were any issues with foreign permits, Jan, as chairman of the NIWO (Dutch International Road Carriers Organisation), would know how to solve them. This feeling of mutual trust only grew stronger over the years. "Jan has been immensely important for Transvemij," says Ad, "TVM was his second home, it was in his blood. We were two peas in a pod. That can be misconstrued, but what I mean is that we could face the storms together."

THE LAW OF THE SEA

When Jan Lensveld unexpectedly passed away in 2007, Ad said goodbye not only to a 'unique guide to the world of transport,' but also to an unconditionally supportive and loyal friend. The day before, they had said goodbye with a firm handshake after a TVM members meeting. Jan died in his home, the TVM pin still on his suit. "Jan was a proper no-nonsense Rotterdammer," Ad said in his farewell speech, "strong-principled and straightforward." Jan did not always make it easy on those who had to work with him. "Loyalty and integrity will, in the worst of storms, always result in respect, friendship and success in business," Ad knows. "Such is the law of the sea."

A MENTOR

In 1999, Tom van Herk, Jan's son-in-law, became chairman of the supervisory board of TVM. Initially, he had little interest in the position. He wanted to focus his attention on the management of his transport company, but Ad managed to persuade him. For 15 years, Tom would fulfil the role of chairman with verve, true to his word. Two years later, in 2001, Arjan became general manager at the age of 32. Even though Tom was 22 years older, the two men got along right away. "He was like a mentor to me," says Arjan, "he provided constructive criticism, was one hundred percent loyal to TVM, incredibly reliable and always happy to brainstorm

with me." For the young manager, having a man with some backbone at his side was important. It was someone, other than his father, on whom he could rely.

UNITING

Being slightly shy and modest, Tom had the ability to unite people, Ad and Arjan strongly agree on that. He was very popular among TVM members, who truly saw him as one of them. The carriers he represented knew him well. "Tom didn't ask for the limelight," Arjan explains, "but when he got up in front of those people

at an annual meeting, with his tall figure and deep voice, he was one of them." When there was cause for a celebration, Tom celebrated with the people who had made it happen within the company. Grabbing a beer together, being among the people; that's how he united the group.

LEADING THE TROOPS

As an entrepreneur, Tom was not afraid to take risks. Under his leadership, TVM became more financially powerful. Heavy and complex issues didn't scare him. It's all well and good when the sailing is smooth, but when it came to taking difficult decisions, he was not afraid to take a stand. Everyone had someone ghost-write their annual speeches, but not Tom. "No, Ad," Tom would say, "I'll do that myself."

"He really led the troops, as chairman," says Arjan. "He'd go: 'Guys, this is what I propose. Do we all agree?'" Ad adds: "Tom had a natural authority. That wasn't just because of his stature and his voice. It was just as much his manner. His modesty. He could give you this feeling of 'I'm not against you, I'm on your side.'"

SPORTS FANS

TVM has owned a professional skating team, with Irene Wüst and Sven Kramer as its stars. Tom was always very involved



Tom, Ad and Jan, 1980.

with the skating team and went with them to the Winter Olympics in Vancouver and Sochi, and various World Championships. He could enjoy that immensely. They flew there with a select group of about 20 people to cheer on the team; only large carriers and important TVM business relations were invited. Jan was more



Ad and Arjan Bos, 2021.

committed to the cycling team and often went to the Tour of the Netherlands. Ad laughs at the memory: "When cyclist Johan Capiot was first to cross the finish line at the Proftour of Oostvoorne, Jan took him aside and slipped him 100 euros. He was such a kind-hearted man. Just like Tom."

ANOTHER VAN HERK ON BOARD

In 2011, Mark van Herk, Tom's son, joined the family business. It brought a sense of peace among the ranks, according to Ad and Arjan. With Mark at the helm, the continuity of the family business was secured. "There was another Van Herk on board after all," Arjan laughs. Keeping it 'all in the family' was important. There was no more cause for speculation; no conglomerate was going to come to take over LV and this was appreciated by the staff. "Tom would have been immensely proud of Mark, I'm certain of it. And of where he's taken the company."

Tom's passing in 2017 was a tough blow on everyone. Tom had been on the supervisory board for over 20 years. Just as Ad spoke at Jan's funeral, Arjan spoke at Tom's. "There was an almost palpable flood of sympathy," Ad recalls in a soft voice, "Tom was so dear to so many. People still tell me how fond they were of him." To commemorate his commitment and his exceptional service record, the auditorium in TVM's head office was named after Tom.

CROSS-POLLINATION

TVM and LV go way back, their paths crossing again and again. Mark worked at TVM for some years before joining LV, and now it is time for Arjan to make the switch. "I've been general manager for 20 years now. It's great to be able to take on this new challenge and I'm really looking forward to it." As of September 2021, he will join LV's Global Executive Board and will be working closely with Mark, Menno, Chris, Jonathan, Eric, and many others. To him, it feels a bit like coming home. "Although TVM will always be close to my heart, the decision was not a difficult one. TVM is a cooperative, but has the DNA of

a family business," Arjan explains. This is why the corporate culture of LV Group suits him well. Joke van Herk has called him to let him know that she and Ludo, Marks brother, are happy to have him on board. For Arjan, it feels like a very warm welcome. "The lives of TVM and LV have long been intertwined. We're not actively seeking it out, but it just happens."

INSURANCE PEOPLE AND CARRIERS

"We are insurance people, and Jan and Tom were carriers. They represented the membership, both were at home in that world. As directors of an insurance company, we did not belong there - but they did," Arjan explains. It is this link that makes the cooperation so fruitful. The two parties learn from each other. Despite their differences and the businesslike nature of the initial relationship, the men developed a warm friendship for life. Twice, they went to Rome with their wives; after Jan's farewell as president and after Tom's farewell as chairman. It became a special place for them. Father and son are quiet for a moment. Then Ad says: "They were both worth their weight in gold for TVM."

NO CONGLOMERATE WAS GOING TO COME TO TAKE OVER LV

FINANCIAL MANAGER

Edwin (55) has worked at LV since December 2001. As Financial manager he works on anything and everything related to the financial administration of the company. He provides the monthly figures to the management, works with Annemarie to provide the salary administration, calculates the VAT and checks the data. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Edwin is in close contact with the administrative officers at all LV business departments, at which individual price agreements and invoices to clients are made. "We work on the figures at the very end of the line," says Edwin. "Making sure everything adds up." This requires short lines of communication between the various departments and himself.

Edwin is a team player, and a football fan. If one of the players has an off day during a match, the others pick up the slack and you win as a team. The same principle applies to business, he explains. His work is part of something bigger. "You all work towards the same goal," says Edwin, "we all want to provide the best possible results for our employer. When everyone

contributes their bit and does their best, everything works out well."

His view on LV as a company can be summarized in three core values: loyalty, approachability, commitment. This applies to Mark, Eric and Menno as well as former managing director Tom and his wife Joke, whom he remembers as "amiable, down-to-earth sort of people." Tom asked Edwin one day to join him for a meeting at the bank. He was wearing a t-shirt and jeans that day. "If I'd known, I would have put on a suit this morning," said Edwin after the meeting. "No worries," Tom replied, "I do not like wearing a suit either. You gave all the right answers. That's what matters."



Edwin Top.

Photo: Katja Poelwijk.

WAREHOUSING

MIDDLESBROUGH

When Colin Ainsley joined LV Shipping in 1995 as transport manager in Middlesbrough, he could not have imagined that he would be responsible for only three trucks. Having previously been responsible for 70 vehicles and 200 trailers, it is easy to see why he was a little disappointed. At the time, LV worked mainly with subcontractors. His disappointment did not last long. Chris Lewin gave him ample opportunity to process the orders internally and expand the transport department. Slowly but surely, LV's own vehicle fleet increased and subcontractors were only hired as required.



Colin Ainsley, 2021.

“MORE EGGS IN ME BASKET”

Colin also focused on acquiring new clients for the Middlesbrough warehouses. Growing the vehicle fleet went hand in hand with these acquisitions. Colin understood well that a wide spread of clients not only decreased risk but also meant more work for the drivers. “Instead of having a small operation, I had a much bigger operation, with more eggs in me basket. So I had more income, from different angles.” From three trucks in 1995, the fleet increased to 27 trucks and 40 trailers by 2021. The number of employees also grew. Today, some 70 people work for LV in Middlesbrough, 25 of whom are employed across the various warehouses. The rising demand for new warehouses has meant more were added. Since taking over Michel Glass Packaging and packag-

ing giant Valenbeck, LV no longer has to rely on subcontractors for packing. With the takeover of Valenbeck, LV gained a 72,000 m² packaging factory, strategically located in Jarrow, near Newcastle.

DIVERSIFICATION

“A lot has changed in 35 years,” says Colin. Ten years ago, LV modernised the warehouses and all drivers became certified in the driver safety training course. Most of the work in Middlesbrough is warehouse-related; mainly storing and distributing clients' goods to their buyers. In 2012, the pallet network service was added: freight on pallets could now be picked up at the client's location and dropped off at its destination.



Warehouse and storage facility, Teesport Commerce Park, Middlesbrough (25.900 m²).



Warehouse and storage LV Tees Commerce Park (left) and LV Telford Road (12.200 m²).

Colin, who replaced Chris as Northern regional director, appreciates the diversity of operations. Transport, warehousing, packing and production work – it all involves multitasking. He believes this is characteristic of LV: “The company always looks at diversity. What they can do, what value they can add.”

MAASVLAKTE, ROTTERDAM

On the other side of the North Sea, on the Maasvlakte, an industrial area built on a massive man-made stretch of new land at the Maas river estuary, lies the warehouse of LV Netherlands. LV's first warehouse on home soil, measuring well over 10,000 m², was put into operation two years ago for British clients requiring a storage area in mainland Europe because of expected



Brexit-related customs issues. The warehouse relocated in the summer of 2021 to a new site that can house 30,000 pallets. The LV warehouse sits among other large-scale freight forwarding companies, with slogans like “Everything revolves around logistics” plastered on their façades. Trucks with Eastern European number plates drive back and forth and impressive cranes line the quay to bring containers ashore. The warehouse stores goods from all over the world; bags of toy parts, agricultural foil, canned herbs and spices but also luxury items, from mattresses and solar-powered barbecues to outdoor sports equipment – anything that sells.



The new warehouse on the Maasvlakte, now a done deal, August 2021.

E-COMMERCE

The stored goods are mainly items sold by LV clients to consumers worldwide via webshops. The e-commerce sector has seen explosive growth over the last few years. A huge contributing factor to this growth was the COVID-19 outbreak, when sending goods per container became very expensive, which meant clients sought to store their stock on the European continent for distribution throughout Europe. The Dutch fiscal law and logistic environment lends itself well to providing this service to non-European clients. LV ensures that the right products are stocked and that the relevant import duties are paid. This means the product can be traded freely within Europe and the buying party does not end up paying import duties.

UNLOADERS AND PICKERS

They do more than just order picking at the warehouse. A permanent team of unloaders (employees who manually unload containers, sort the products and place

them on pallets), order pickers, forklift truck drivers and a supervisor work together to store, pack and ship products to customers. The various items in a shipment are checked, assembled or combined by the team, with the support of temporary workers as required. The people working at the office address clients and also monitor incoming and outgoing orders.

ORDER FULFILMENT

LV offers added value to their clients, taking care of the full logistic process from door to door – from the factory to the buyer. More and more clients are starting to appreciate the advantages of this type of order fulfilment. Until recently, this type of operation was only run in LV Netherlands, but the company has now also set up a warehouse in Houston for a client dealing in LED lighting.

The new warehouse on the Maasvlakte.
Photo: Katja Poelwijk.

DIVERSITY OF OPERATIONS

For LV Netherlands, warehousing is still a relatively new activity. LV UK, on the other hand, has a long history of stock management, since their first contract with Marathon Oil and the opening of the Tees Base warehouse. And yet, the ways in which the two branches operate their warehouses are quite distinct. The UK branch mainly stores large industrial objects, such as pressed car parts and steel for the offshore industry and wind farms, while the Netherlands branch stores consumer goods with a short turnaround time. Whereas the materials stored at the Tees Basis may have to be transported by ship, the goods stored in the Netherlands warehouse often fit in an envelope. Most of the clients of LV Shipping Ltd. are UK-based, while LV Netherlands caters mainly to clients located outside Europe. It is one of the many things that makes LV such an interesting and diversified company.



Noëlla Hellemond.

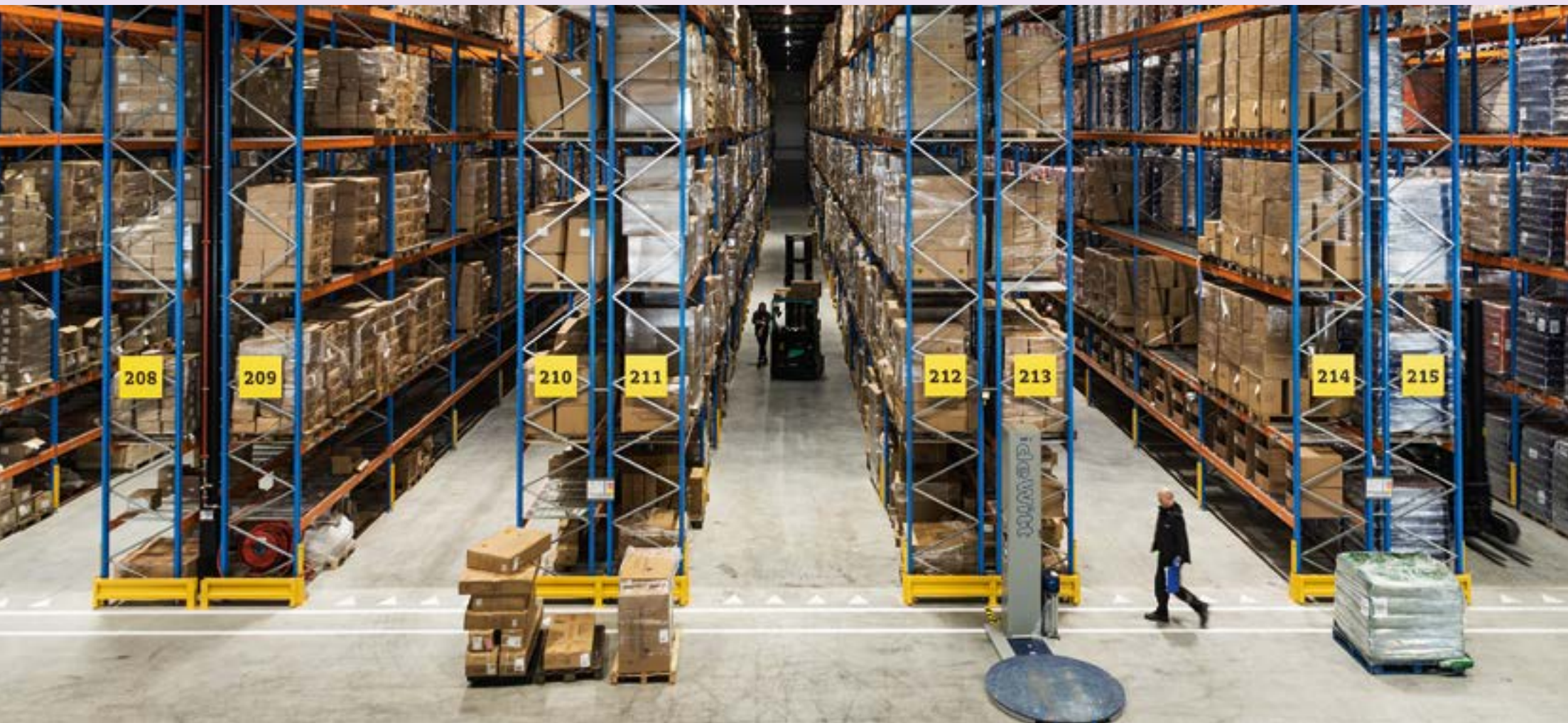
Photo: Katja Poelwijk.

WAREHOUSE EMPLOYEE

Noëlla (24) is customer service officer at the Maasvlakte warehouse office. “We are the people behind every order” she says. Her work takes place “behind the screens”, so to say.

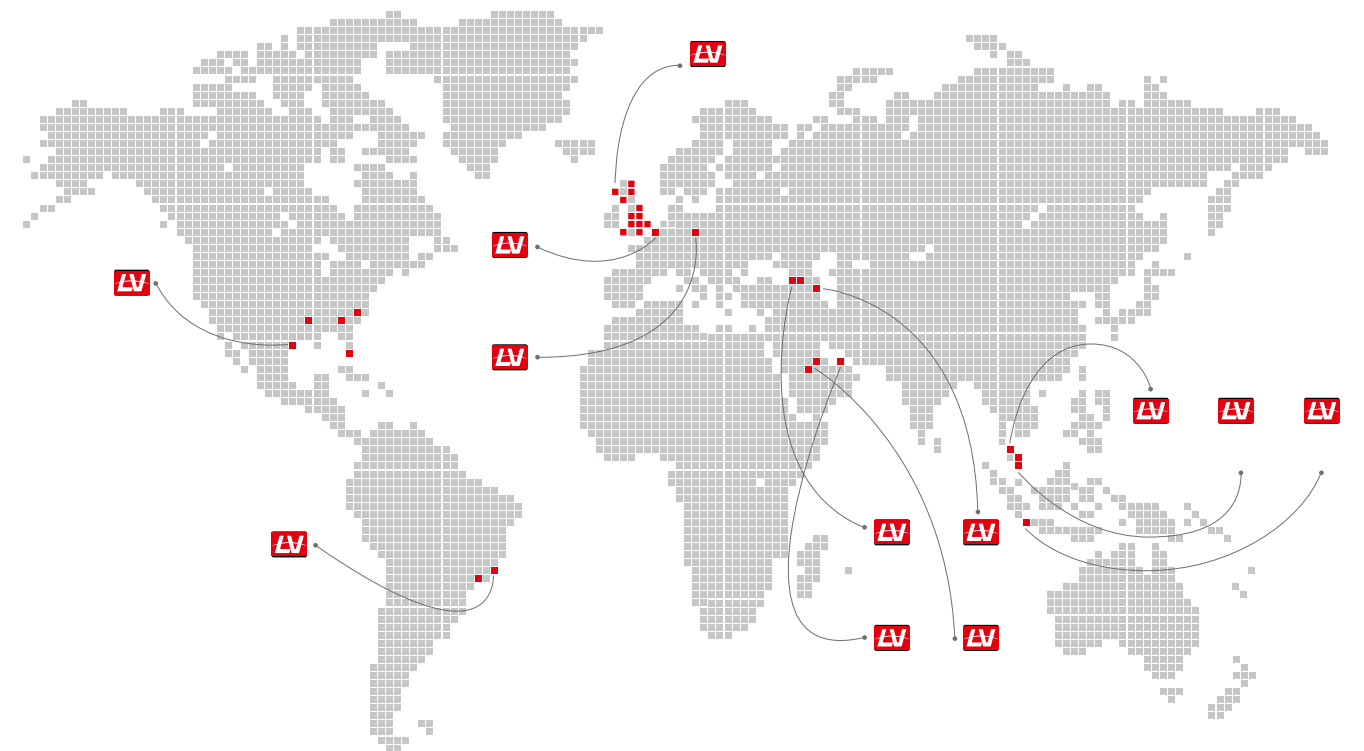
On one screen the orders are viewed in *Shiphero*: e-commerce software that is linked to the clients’ websites. On a second screen she can view the package carrier information. If all goes well, the orders are processed automatically “upstairs” in the warehouse. If the address details are incorrect, the order is sent “downstairs,” where Noëlla and her colleagues will try to find out what went wrong and enter the order manually.

Noëlla joined LV two years ago via Danny, the former business unit manager at the warehouse. She was looking for a work placement opportunity as a Port logistics student. At LV, she was offered a standard salary, which is not standard practice. Many of her fellow students were not officially employed by their training company. Noëlla was given the chance to show what she was capable of, from day one. “I am not just another interning student or seen as the cheap assistant. I am given opportunities to learn. This level of trust is wonderful. I will stay with the company until I complete my degree.”



X

A WORLDWIDE NETWORK WITH A LOCAL PRESENCE



2010 - 2020

A WORLDWIDE NETWORK WITH A LOCAL PRESENCE

The last decade in LV's 100-year history was both characterised by its expansion outside of Europe, as well as personal loss. The year 2010 got off to a good start with the opening of an office in Singapore, which was directly linked to a large project.



SEA DRAGON-PROJECT

At the end of the previous decade, LV Shipping managed to land a large contract for the building of two floating offshore drilling rigs, large pontoons comparable to catamarans. LV's role was to oversee the logistics of the building of these exploration ships. The project, named Sea Dragon, was launched in 2008 and ran for two years. To strengthen the team, Terry Collier from LV UK brought Dick Everton on board as technical procurement manager for this project. Terry and Dick had worked together on other projects and appreciated one another's work. "It was amazing," Dick reminisces. "It lasted only two years, but there will never be another project like it." Project Sea Dragon was carried out by a handful of highly dedicated experts, which was unusual for such a complex project. More-

People involved in the Sea Dragon project. From left to right: Chris Lewin, Setti Darab, Terry Collier and Phil Gerrick, Singapore, 2013.

over, Sea Dragon was financed by a single investor: Lloyds Bank in the UK.

The client, Sea Dragon, made office space available for the entire team in a particularly luxurious Edwardian-style house in the chic London neighbourhood of Mayfair. The entire operation was to be managed from this office, which came with its own apartment on the upper floor and a wine cellar. The team included Setti Darab from LV Shipping in Tilbury, East London, whom Dick had met during previous projects and would go on to work with extensively in the future as well.

The pontoons were built at shipping yards in Russia and subsequently sent to TAG,

a factory at Teesport Commerce Park in Middlesbrough, to be outfitted with the all the necessary equipment. In 2008, the global financial crisis broke out and Lloyds Bank was growing nervous. The bank had invested in a project run in an area it knew very little about, and therefore hired the accounting and consulting company KPMG to investigate whether the project was actually viable. KPMG had no expertise in the building of drilling rigs, but had its doubts about whether TAG in Middlesbrough would be capable of completing the project. It advised Lloyds Bank to have the project completed by a shipping yard in Singapore with a good track record instead. Shortly after that, the pontoons were towed to Singapore via South Africa for completion. Dick stayed on as head of procurement to assure continuity and to discuss the ins-and-outs of the project with LV.

SINGAPORE AND ASIA

After exploring options in Asia earlier, the time had finally come for LV UK. Project Sea Dragon was the direct catalyst that led to the opening of the LV Shipping office in Singapore. After so many years of preparation, the company was finally ready. Chris: "The Sea Dragon Project was a huge success and Dick played a really important part in that. His advice, help and support was pivotal in starting LV Singapore."

LV Shipping had been working together with another freight forwarder in Singapore for many years. When Phil Gerrick, the manager of this company, returned to his native Australia in 2010, Chris and Tom asked Suresh Joseph, who



Singapore, 2013. With Chris Lewin, Setti Darab, Suresh Joseph and ex-freight forwarder Phil Gerrick from Australia.



Kees Brokling.

Photo: Katja Poelwijk.

DRIVER

Kees (54) was allowed to join his uncle in his Bedford Tipper when he did chores for the municipality of Rotterdam. At age 18, he followed his dream and became a driver, like his uncle and brother.

He has been working for LV since 1987, first in a boom truck with crane and later on special transport abroad. During his career he has seen many changes. The amount of traffic on the road has increased tremendously and the rules and regulations are stricter. Twenty years ago, the atmosphere was more amiable, quieter. He used to meet colleagues at the border and agree where to have dinner and spend the night. Everyone waved at one another. Nowadays he knows few of his colleagues. There are many white number plates on the road: trucks from Eastern Europe. Kees misses the camaraderie. "We now have the 'ping' generation," he says, gesturing at the microwave. There are also advantages. "You used to have to search for a telephone booth to call the boss and drive around with a large wallet with six different currencies: Italian lira, German marks, French francs, Danish kroner and more. That is no longer the case." He does not feel he necessarily has to keep up with modern times. He prefers to drive a vehicle with manual transmission and always has old-fashioned navigation at hand: the Shell road map book of Europe and other maps. "I do it my way."



The opening of LV Balikpapan, Indonesia, 2013.

was working for this freight forwarder, to join the LV team and set up an office for Lensveld in Singapore. “We have not looked back since,” says Suresh, who was appointed managing director right at the start and now oversees all branches in Asia. Since 2010, LV’s growth in the region has been exponential. In 2012, LV



LV Jakarta, Indonesia.

Indonesia opened, with seven locations, including Balikpapan, Jakarta, Surabaya, Batam and Makassar. One year later, LV opened an office in Malaysia. LV soon had two offices in Malaysia - in Bukit Kayu Hitam in the north and in Johor Baruh in the south. In addition, LV had over 80,000 m² of warehouse space in Singapore - one of the largest ports in the world and centrally located in the region.

“The opening of new offices in the region does not stem from an urge for growth,” explains Suresh. “It is solely based on client demand.” The growth was organic. Suresh explains how that works: “LV Malaysia grew based because we were mainly providing truck transport services. Truck transport from Singapore to Thailand goes through Malaysia. Once we started a truck transport department, we quickly saw more opportunities in Malaysia. That’s what happened in a nutshell.”

Work in the region mainly consists of logistics services for the oil and gas industry. From all over the world, parts arrive at the port, where they are “unpacked” and distributed to various offshore platforms in the area by all possible means of transport: helicopter, truck, barge, container ship or plane. All resources are mobilised to transport the parts to their destination. LV provides not only the materials for the construction of a rig, but also logistics services for once the offshore platform is operational. “Clients are loyal,” explains Suresh. “If you provide excellent service,



The LV Singapore office and warehouse.

WIND TURBINE BLADE

Some projects will never be forgotten. There was one such project in 2016; Paul Wilson (USA) and Cees Punselie (NL) look back on the logistics of a unique object.



The windmill blade, 2016.



“Five years ago, we transported the biggest wind turbine blade ever to leave the USA,” says Paul Wilson with pride. Client Blade Dynamics wanted to structurally test the huge windblade, developed by NASA in the United States, in the United Kingdom. LV Shipping was assigned the task of transporting the 78-metre-long blade across the ocean. Cees Punselie travelled from the Netherlands to help his American colleagues supervise this operation.

The blade was transported from the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility in Louisiana by barge on the Mississippi River to the port of New Orleans. It was then transhipped to an export ship, which took it to Antwerp. Just before the ship was to sail off to Europe, the end of the fragile fibreglass blade started rattling quite a bit. Cees, who has the most experience with wind turbine blade transport, provided the solution. “He says: ‘We can build a sock,’ Paul recounts. So, he built a sock, strapped it down, and it worked.”

“It is one of the best projects I have ever worked on,” says Cees, “because I was involved from the very start, together with my colleagues in Houston.” From the preparations through to coming up with solutions, we worked closely together, supporting each other. He follows the blade to the Port of Antwerp, where it was transhipped to a coaster trading vessel which took it to Blyth on the north-eastern coast of England. From there, it was then transported to the testing facility in Blyth. Cees was on site when the vehicle reversed into the Blyth test centre. The client had also flown over and wanted to shake his hand, but Cees refused. “The tip of the blade was sticking out of the test centre, about 30 cm of it was still outside,” Cees says, laughing. A proper freight forwarder does not stop to celebrate until the job has been fully completed.



The windmill blade was delivered on a barge at the port of New Orleans, 2016.



At the quay in New Orleans.



A custom made solution: "the sock."



The tip of the 78-metre-long blade disappears into the test centre.



The wind turbine blade is reversed into the test centre. Blyth, England 2016.





The office of LV in Surabaya, Indonesia.

they won't soon go looking for another supplier." When a rig is relocated, LV comes along. The relationship that LV has built with their clients over the years is the biggest contributor to this unyielding loyalty. The managing director is not the only one involved in maintaining such relationships - it is really a team effort, involving people at every level of the organisation. Suresh believes this is the key to LV's suc-

cess. "We treat everybody with respect. That's an extremely important part of LV's culture." The employees play an important role in this. "Our personnel are the ones who are in daily contact with hundreds of people working on rigs." It's about accessibility and trust. "I always say: 'If you have a problem, and my people cannot solve it, you can call me - 24/7. If you need me, just call.'" This initially resulted in quite a few phone calls, but nowadays it is pretty quiet. "People

ACQUISITIONS

now know they can trust me." He, in turn, receives the same trust from LV's management. "I came to LV Group the same way. You can message Chris Lewin and Mark anytime, they will respond." This way of dealing with each other is unique. You won't find it at many companies, Suresh emphasises.

The continuity of a family business depends on the timely hiring of competent and reliable personnel. The management of LV is always ready to acquire a company when the opportunity arises. In Netherlands, for instance, carrier KPB was acquired from the PAX Group when its CEO retired and, in the UK, freight forwarder Trader Shipping in Felixstowe was acquired and integrated into the LV Felixstowe branch office. In one fell swoop, this acquisition turned LV into the largest freight forwarder in Felixstowe, the largest and most important port city in the UK.

In addition to providing an increased workload, the acquisition also brought new, experienced logistics specialists onboard. The acquisition of Trader LV resulted in over 20 new employees, including a number of crucial staff members. One of them was Andy Willis Betts, current director of the Southern region and successor to Adrian, who retired in 2019.



An example of crate packaging.

"Andy has been very important to the success of Felixstowe," says Adrian. "A great guy. We owe a lot to him." Andy is the head of LV's offices in the south of England. In addition to Felixstowe, where 45 people are employed, these include Great-Yarmouth, Tilbury, London Heathrow and Southampton. Andy has also joined the Board of Directors. Andy's a "people person" but doesn't like being in the spotlight. It's much important to him that he keep contact with the offices under his responsibility, which he visits on a very regular basis. This helps him stay up to date with what is on the mind of his employees. An open door, an active interest in the well-being of employees and building up a personal relationship with them - are all essential when running a company. Andy loves his work enormously.

In addition to Trader Shipping, LV UK also acquired several smaller companies that contributed to the growth of its offices in Liverpool and Heathrow. "Particularly value-accretive are the people that have come with such acquisitions, not necessarily the business they bring in," explains Adrian. But that is not all. In 2011, LV Shipping acquired two large firms specialised in the packaging of export products. The companies were merged into the subsidiaries LV Shipping Ltd. and LV Valenbeck. The packaging facility, located in Jarrow (under Newcastle), is still an important part of the LV Group.

PLANNER

Frank (40) is one of three Lensveld Transport department planners. The department has three Customer Service Officers and one Driver Coordinator. Frank and his planner colleagues coordinate the freight transport from LV clients to the customer.

"We instruct the drivers, who can then set off with the right trailer, documents and equipment." We relay the client's requirements to the people who can make them happen.

Frank strives to work as efficiently as possible to ensure that all clients receive everything by the end of the day, so that both LV and their clients are satisfied. Every day is different, which means the work is never dull. Any issues are resolved as a team; we are very close. He would like to see a single office established for all company departments in the future. Knocking down the walls would allow everyone to work even more efficiently as a team. He explains: "Suppose my team just delivered something in Enkhuizen. They drive back empty. But my colleague in the next business unit just has something to pick up in Enkhuizen but doesn't have a vehicle available. A terrible shame!" Frank believes integrating services can improve the company's service. As things stand now, Frank likes going into the office to work: "Ten years from now, I hope to be working here still."



From left to right: Eric Zoetmulder, Mark van Herk, KC TNG, Suresh Joseph and TS Ho in Singapore, 2017.



LV Valenbeck packaging plant (66.890m²).



Frank van Pairen.

Photo: Katja Poelwijk.



Henk Orchard.

Photo: Katja Poelwijk.

WORKSHOP MANAGER

Henk (55) has worked at LV since 2004 – first as a “hopper”, a driver without his own truck, covering colleagues on holiday or sick leave. He received the protective overalls and a bag full of Lensveld material and waited four months for his first trip, after which he drove a truck for nine years.

First, he worked as a driver of a boom truck (a truck with crane) for special transport loads. But he has also driven with a flatbed trailer, for a steady client, and a trailer with rack. An ideal truck to transport four-metre-wide sheets using a standard-sized truck. He drove through Europe.

Henk remembers having fun with colleagues on his Duisburg-Mülheim trips. They had to transport sheets 18 metres long and four metres wide. Ten drivers would drive in pairs with an escort, to and from the crane. Always at night, when there was less traffic on the road, until six in the morning. It was carnival time. On the way to Germany, they picked up some fancy-dress clothes in Venlo. “We drove around in fancy dress, with devil’s horns or a traditional white lace cap. As we overtook one another we would shoot at the other driver through the open window with a water pistol. We were driving slowly, of course.”

Henk has been the workshop manager for the past five years. He wanted to work near home. He maintains the trailers and semi-trailers with his colleague Ronald. They work on anything from a flat tyre to warped equipment. For the tractor units LV has a maintenance contract with the dealer. Henk never gets bored. “I may be workshop manager,” Henk says, “but I’m actually a Jack of all trades: I maintain the site, do some work around the warehouse, MOT, damage checks, some bookkeeping and anything else that needs doing, such as hanging up a painting or taking the mail to the post office.” He enjoys the variety of work to be done. “I like it here. LV is a good company to work for.” Days off are approved without a fuss. He can always walk into the offices of Mark, Eric and Menno at any time. “I don’t see myself leaving any time soon.”

But LV was not only welcoming new employees; some were also departing. During the Sea Dragon project, irreconcilable differences arose between Tom and Marcus, which resulted in Marcus deciding to go his own way. Tom’s right-hand man, who had worked for LV since the 1970’s, left the company. Though it pained Tom, he had to move on. The rapid proliferation of developments at work required his attention. What’s more; it appeared that his son Mark was interested in working at LV.

MARK

Mark was born in 1977 as the eldest son of Tom van Herk and Joke Lensveld. Three years later, in 1980, his brother Ludo was born, rounding out the family. The fact that they were descended from the founder, Jan Lensveld, played no role in the boys’ early lives. They were, however, acutely aware that their father Tom and grandpa Jan ran a transport company. They grew up with it, just as Joke and Ans had, back in the day.

Tom and Joke encourage their sons to go their own way. It was certainly not expected of them that they would go on to work in the family business. Tom knew first-hand how complicated it was to run a family business and how hard the responsibility could be. It was not something he wanted to burden his sons with. Mark also stayed on the side-line for a long time. In 2002, after graduating from Erasmus University in Rotterdam with a degree in Fiscal Economics, Mark began working in the insurance intermediary Lippmann Group in The Hague. Five years later, he made the switch to work in a customer-facing role at TVM. When Mark’s career at TVM hit a crossroads in 2010, which happened to coincide with a decline in Tom’s health, the time seemed ripe for a chat. Mark cautiously inquired if Tom might have an opportunity for him at LV. Mark: “His response was: ‘I’ll think about it.’ I had never heard anything like that, so for me it effectively meant ‘yes’.” It was CFO Eric Zoetmulder, who had been working at LV since 2003, that made the decisive move and convinced Tom to hire Mark. The home front was entirely behind the decision.

In September 2011, at the age of 35, Mark joined the company as Director of Sales and Marketing. For a number of

years, Tom, Eric and Mark ran the business together. Tom, who was already over 60, observed how Mark did things differently, but gave him the freedom to work his own way. What’s more, they saw eye to eye on where they wanted to take the business. Mark: “He never told me to do things differently, even if he may have thought so. I really appreciated that about him. But he also had faith in what I was doing and saw that it was working.” In the years that follow, Mark was given more and more responsibility. The transition ran smoothly. They travel together extensively and everywhere they went Mark observed the unforgettable impression his father made on others. It was an exciting time. The company was growing; in the US an LV office was opened in Houston and a jubilee was on the horizon.

THE SILVER JUBILEE OF LV SHIPPING LTD.

In 2011, LV Shipping Ltd. celebrated its 25th year in business. So much had happened since the flying start of LV Shipping in the United Kingdom with the opening of the offices in Middlesbrough and Felixstowe. LV spared no expense in celebrating its success at its silver jubilee in October 2011 in Edinburgh on Queen Elisabeth’s former yacht “HMY Britannia”. A joyful photograph shows managers and employees proudly smiling at the camera. One of those people, who still worked in the UK at the time, was Paul Wilson. Shortly after, Paul was asked by Tom and Chris to go to the United States to set up an LV office in Houston, Texas. Paul was the first, and is still the only, expat working outside of his home market for LV.

HOUSTON: OIL AND GAS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

In 2011, Paul was still working at the LV office in Newcastle. One of his clients at the time was Wellstream International, a manufacturer of pipes for the oil and gas industry. A company operating worldwide with interests in Brazil, the US and the UK. Wellstream was Newcastle’s largest account and an important one for the group. Nobody knows the company better than Paul, who started managing the account in 2002. When Wellstream was acquired by the “billion-dollar monster”



LV Shipping Ltd. 25th Anniversary Celebration on the HMV "Britannia", Edinburgh, 2011.

SALES MANAGER

Jean-Paul (28) has worked as a Sales manager for LV Netherlands since 2019. He is in charge of sales for all LV departments. This was not always the case: in the past each department took care of their own sales. This resulted in clients doing business with department A, but not with B or C, simply because these departments were not interconnected.

It is Jean-Paul's job to run the sales of LV Group holistically, and to kindly inform the client about their complete service package. "For example, sea freight arrives in a container, which is then transported

all the difference. You have to know the company's backstory. Besides, Jean-Paul knows exactly what he is selling. LV has quality equipment. That may mean that they are not the cheapest, but they offer quality service, too.



Jean-Paul Kers.

Photo: Katja Poelwijk.

to the client or a storage facility. We can transport it using our own trucks, and process the container in our own warehouse," says Jean-Paul. This way, LV forges several connections with the client.

Pre-pandemic, Jean-Paul was on the road at least four days a week, visiting and acquiring new clients. He was always busy. The 'difficult' clients are the most fun, he affirms. This may be a project with various tricky aspects involved, or when it takes seven to eight meetings with a client before they place an order. Those situations require diplomacy, patience and understanding. "You need to wait, but not too long." Preparation can make

For Jean-Paul, "scoring" is the highlight of his job. "I also play football," he says, laughing. He does not discriminate: he is just as happy when a client books a single container as when a client books 10,000 containers. At the same time, he is always prepared to help one of the departments resolve operational issues.

The management lets Jean-Paul decide when and how to do his job. From experience, he knows that this is not always the case. He used to work for a company with

a very strict hierarchy. "A quote had to be sent to the head office for approval," he recounts. "After selling something to the client I then had to sell it within the department, too." Conversely, the company culture at LV is open. Jean-Paul believes this forms the basis of LV's success. "People often say: 'We are a family business.' At LV they actually are. They do not micro-manage. I believe this is the reason they have been around for 100 years. Sometimes we ourselves don't know what we are capable of when, actually, we can do anything."



Global Strategy Team meeting in Rio de Janeiro, November 2018. From left to right: Chris Lewin, Murray Cooper, Paul Wilson and Eduardo de Miranda.

GE Oil & Gas, a large Houston-based conglomerate, it seemed only logical that LV would provide local representation to ensure continuity in the logistics for such an important client. Paul was clearly the best person for the job. It wasn't until 2014 that Paul definitively moved to the US, after obtaining all the necessary permits.

Houston, located on the Gulf of Mexico coast, is the largest city in Texas. "It's the oil and gas capital of the world," says Paul. "This is where it all happens." The work in the region is primarily related to the oil and gas industry, but also includes domestic and international freight transport. Together with his nine colleagues, Paul staffs the head office in Houston as well as four smaller branch offices in Rock Hill, Clarksville, Atlanta and Miami. The Clarksville office, which is exclusively dedicated to domestic transportation, is staffed by two full-time employees. This industry has traditionally been staffed mainly by women. Paul and his colleague Jason are the only men in the team. "For whatever reason, when we advertise for a job, more women than men apply," Paul explains.

Thanks to Houston's unique location as the centre of the worldwide oil and gas industry, Paul's team is in contact with all LV offices. "We transport goods to Brazil, we transport to every office in the United Kingdom, we transport goods to the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Singapore, Indonesia - so we work with pretty much everybody," explains Paul. For domestic transportation, they also work with local subcontractors. Paul purposely opts for smaller subcontractors over the "big boys". This means that LV and the drivers can contact each other when needed.

JONATHAN

It was 2012 when Jonathan Lewin, Chris' son, finally received the call he had been waiting for all along: "Would you like to work at LV?" It was a touching moment for Jonathan. Working for LV had been his dream ever since his father woke him to go to the quay when he was only five years old. "LV is in my DNA," Jonathan explains passionately, "I grew up with LV and love it - this was what I was destined to do."

When he left school, his dyslexia drove him to enter the work force straight away, though his parent gave him the freedom to discover his talents. In the end, Jonathan appeared to have been perfectly cut out for working in road transport, where he gained significant experience in special haulage and grew into a managerial role. Then came the phone call. Jonathan could immediately start work in LV's new project team. "I had no experience in coastal shipments, freight forwarding, airfreight or sea freight. None whatsoever. But I had the right attitude."

On his first visit to the Netherlands, he was picked up from Schiphol Airport by Mark, who had started working at LV one year prior. As they often played together as children, it immediately felt just like old times. For Tom and Chris, it was important that Mark and Jonathan got to know each other well in order to forge a single vision for the future. For this reason, and to learn more about business management, Jonathan joined Chris' department.

Standing: Mark van Herk and Cees Punselie. Sitting: Garry McMullen and Jonathan Lewin.



UK MEMORIES

Wendy Nice (58) today works as non-executive director and is a member of the Board of directors. She came to LV with Chris in 1986 and has been the only female manager for some time. Chris, as her direct manager and someone she knows well, gives her all possible opportunities to grow.



Chris Lewin, Phil Gerrick, Wendy Nice and Terry Collier at the five-year anniversary of LV Singapore, 2015.

"I am a bit like a gipsy," she says, referring to the wide range of positions she has held within the company. She saw LV Shipping grow under Chris' management to what it is today. "Chris has done so much for the company. He has really grown the company, he has opened the offices overseas, he has expanded the UK, he's always looking for something new to bring to the table." In the beginning, he frequently drove from Middlesbrough to Aberdeen and back; a 445-kilometre trip. "He'd just work, work, work. Relentless in

his work ethic, and that hasn't changed, really." Chris also believes in corporate social responsibility and makes time to volunteer for various charities. "He is fair, easy going and quite selfless," says Wendy.

As a representative of LV, she once had lunch with Prince Andrew and a select group of people at Buckingham Palace – a unique experience. A few years ago, she was invited to join the Board of directors on a trip to Singapore. She felt honoured to have been asked. Even though she has now officially retired, Wendy will be working for a while yet. "I just enjoy getting to help make some important decisions going forward."

Mark Cockerill (59) was one of the first drivers to be employed by LV Shipping Ltd. on 6 December 1987. He has driven thousands of kilometres throughout the UK, in van or small trucks.

He has had various positions, including those of transport coordinator and warehouse man, and is one of the most loyal and reliable employees LV Shipping has in

View over Junong Port, Singapore, 2015.



Five-year anniversary of LV Singapore, 2015. In the picture, from left to right: Lee Woolams, Eric Zoetmulder, Mark van Herk, Chris Lewin, Tom van Herk, Andy Willis-Betts, TS Ho, Wendy Nice, Terry Collier, KC TNG and Suresh Joseph.

its ranks. He is currently stock controller at the Telford Road Depot.

He fondly looks back on the past 34 years: "Working with Chris all these years has been an experience, it's been fantastic. The effort that he puts in LV Shipping is unbelievable. He is a very fair and generous man." LV Shipping is like family to Mark. When he had to have surgery recently, they looked after him. "You don't get that in many companies nowadays."

Feeling that you are part of the family, and the variety of the work, are what make the job so enjoyable for Mark. Everyone is always ready to help out and ready to go the extra mile for the company. He will never forget the many times Chris came to the warehouse after working all day at the office to help the team package the goods, the whole night, until the early hours. He would then eat the packed breakfast his wife came to bring him and go right back to the office. "Chris' work is hands-on. Picking up the tools and working alongside of us," says Mark. He believes this attitude demonstrates his employer's work ethics but also his pleasant nature. He is adamant: "For me, LV Shipping is Chris Lewin."



Mark Cockerill.



The Van Herks and Lewins met up regularly for a meal with the children at Central Park in Middlesbrough. Once, the boys are taken for a visit to the MV Lapad after. Both Mark and Jonathan have fond memories of it.



finally ready for use. A large workshop is located on the northern side of the new building where two service technicians carry out maintenance on lorries every day. The site is large enough to include a regular car park and storage facility. On the south side of the building, large windows provide a magnificent view of the ships passing by on the Nieuwe Maas river. It really is rather breath-taking.

The office at the Waterleidingstraat, Vlaardingen 2006.

The decision to hire both Mark and Jonathan into the LV Group demonstrates that the company was already consciously pursuing a long-term strategy.

NEW OFFICE IN VLAARDINGEN

In the Netherlands, the office on Waterleidingstraat was bursting at the seams. The building was refurbished multiple times over the years but was unable to accommodate the modern-day needs of its occupants. Management opted for a new building. In 2012, LV's brand-new head office on Koggehaven in Vlaardingen was



FREIGHT FORWARDER

Sander (36) is a project manager at the Shipping & Logistics department, the key forwarding department at LV. He likes working at the company, it is part of his life. As a freight forwarder, he is the spider in the web. He is in constant contact with many different parties: clients, suppliers, carriers, exporters, engineering draughtsman, etc. But also with his colleagues at the warehouse, transport and container trucking departments.

His work is varied. "One moment you are working on sending a one-kilo package and the next on a *lashing* plan to transport a 33-metre tower." Sander explains: "a lashing company makes sure that the containers on board are secured using twist locks or chains." All projects are different, and therefore have to be processed differently. The department searches for the

the office, he is the eyes and ears of the client. For new projects Sander always does a few on-site visits to see whether the loading and unloading of the freight is done safely and successfully, according to the client's requirements. His field service colleague takes over when he leaves.



Twistlocks Helix tower.

Sander works closely with LV colleagues from the UK, Houston and Rio offices. "Our work moves with the clock," he says. "Early in the morning, we are in contact with Asia, as their day starts before ours. During our afternoon is when the sun rises in Brazil. They are still in the middle of their working day when most offices in the Netherlands close for the day." Sander and his colleagues are also available outside standard office hours to ensure no time is wasted and the transport is never halted "all part of the job."

most economically feasible transport option, taking safety, available options and client preferences into account. Taking care of all required licences is part of the job. He needs only a computer and a telephone to work. "The best part of the job is that you are working on everything at once," says Sander. At times, it is hard to keep switching from one task to another. He must always plan two steps ahead to do his job right.

The COVID-19 lockdown meant that he has had to spend more time at the office, but he is usually found on the quays, the terminals or on location with clients of LV. When he is out of



Sander de Groot.

Photo: Katja Poelwijk.



The office at the Waterleidingstraat, Vlaardingen 2006.

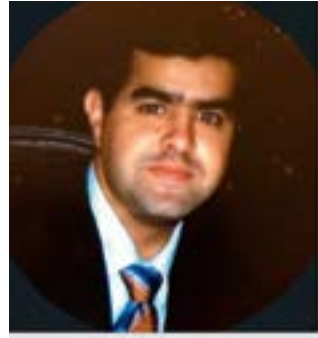
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

After opening offices in Indonesia and Malaysia in 2012 and 2013, LV spread its wings to South America in 2014. The opening of an office in Rio De Janeiro in 2015 was accompanied by the acquisition of the British company Wellstream International by GE Oil & Gas in the United States. LV had already been providing logistics services to Wellstream for years from its office in the United Kingdom. But the oil giant GE was not interested in working with third parties and requests to

have an employee from LV working on-site. Finding a suitable candidate was left in the hands of LV's management team.

Eduardo de Miranda graduated in 2000 with a degree in material engineering and travelled to Europe in 2002 to work for a German company specialised in applied technology in the oil and gas industry, gaining work experience. Over the course of his 12 years at the company, he focussed on project management. Back in Brazil, he was employed by a local company and worked more as an international supply chain manager than as an engineer. He learned about LV via a mutual client and was asked to apply for the position of managing director of LV Brazil. He was hired, and at the start of 2015 LV opened its first office in South America. "And here I am, six years later," grins Eduardo.

The department in Rio currently has 10 employees. LV works with a represent-



Eduardo de Miranda.

ative in São Paulo, where many of the company's clients are located. LV's clients consist of both large domestic companies that operate globally, as well as local companies. Most of its clients are directly or indirectly involved in the offshore industry. "I like to talk directly to the owners," Eduardo explains. "They are responsible for the finances and understand that you may not be the cheapest supplier, but you save them time and money in the long run." He describes his work in Brazil as managing logistics: "We do anything related to international freight, be it by air, sea or road." This covers container shipment, but also oversized general cargo, for which especially large vessels are leased. The department has no trucks of

LV and the familiar contacts with managers worldwide are important factors, but he's not easy to please. "I always think we can do better. I can always find flaws in everything. Because if you think you are perfect, then you will never try to achieve excellence. So I always try to figure out what can be done better."

Eduardo believes that the global decline in demand for oil and gas also creates new opportunities. We see more and more that oil companies making the switch to producing renewable energy, which creates a challenge we must accept as it affects our business. If the company is pursuing new types of energy, we will bend with them."



its own, choosing instead to work with subcontractors. Of all LV offices, this one has the most contact with the United Kingdom, the US and the Netherlands.

Paul Wilson, Suresh Joseph, Murray Cooper, Eduardo de Miranda, Mark van Herk, Eric Zoetmulder, Nazar Al-Saif and Chris Lewin in Rio de Janeiro, November 2018.

The fact that its team consists exclusively of locals is a significant advantage. They speak fluent Portuguese, know how to get things done in Brazil and understand the clients. These factors, alongside the pursuit of perfect service, are what drive LV's success, explains Eduardo. He really loves his work. The horizontal organisation of



The new head office at Koggehaven 26 in Vlaardingen.

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

In 2014, LV opened an office in Azerbaijan. The country is located on the Caspian Sea in the middle of the Caucasus on the border between Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Azerbaijan literally means “the country of the eternal flame” and possesses large natural oil and gas reserves. Together with other countries



From left to right: Eric Zoetmulder, Eduardo de Miranda, Mark van Herk, Chris Lewin, Fuad Mammadov, KC TNG, Suresh Joseph, TS Ho. Singapore, February 2018.

bordering the Caspian Sea, including Georgia, Azerbaijan is part of the Caspian region. Fuad Mammadov is the general manager of the head office in Baku and is responsible for the entire region. This currently includes offices in the Georgian cities of Tbilisi and Poti, which were opened in 2020.

As a young, self-employed freight forwarder, Fuad reached out to LV in 2012 in search of a logistics partner in the region. LV management invited him to London for a meeting. Tom saw promise in Fuad’s plans to expand in the region and gave the green light. In 2014 Fuad started working for LV with two colleagues. His first client was the British oil company BP. They started out with a few truckloads per week, which quickly increased to 17. The lorries drive round-trip from the UK to Baku—a route of 5,000 kilometres, running across Europe and through countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain.

The success of the project created much-needed financial flexibility as the oil industry was suffering from falling

oil prices during the same period. Investors held off, waiting to see which way the wind would blow. LV Azerbaijan had to go in search of new markets. Fuad’s team skilfully executed any and all business that came their way, ranging from the shipping of a single container for a small business to an order of hundreds of containers per month. Their strategy worked. In just three years LV had 120 new clients and its dependence on oil and gas projects—or on one single client—was greatly reduced. But the large number of clients also led to a strong increase in the number of employees. The work must always get done, after all. LV Baku currently employs 70 people, spread over two locations—one office and one warehouse, making Baku one of LV’s largest offices worldwide. LV is now the largest logistics service provider in Azerbaijan.



An employee of LV Azerbaijan gives directions for the loading of a container, January 2021.



Personnel preparing a shipment, Azerbaijan, September 2020.



A truck of LV Azerbaijan on the road with freight,
September 2020.



A meet-up on the way. Bas van Weenen with two colleagues from Azerbaijan at truck stop De Meern, the Netherlands, summer 2020.

The warehouse is used for both packaging and parking the trucks and trailers. LV Baku has 20 vehicles, which are principally used for local freight delivery from the airport, seaport or train station. To give an idea of the size of LV's operations, these 20 vehicles account for less than 5% of LV's total shipments. The other 95% is outsourced to subcontractors.

Project freight forwarding has been on the rise lately. LV recently won a contract for the building of a large oil refinery, commissioned by an Italian company. Thanks to its expertise in project freight forwarding, LV is considering expanding into countries such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Turkey, where many potential clients are located.

TOM'S FAREWELL

Since he started working at LV in the 1970s, Tom has always been keenly focussed on the future. He was responsible for saving the company from bankruptcy and transitioning to modern management. In the 1980s, Tom was the one who dared to look beyond the North Sea and made progress towards further expansion. He was the one with the vision, who took both risks and responsibility and reassured others. Fuad had the following to say about Tom: "He was a very good guy, who could instantly read a person. He had a vision that my plan of starting in Baku had potential, which ultimately became reality."

But then Tom fell ill. The "gentle giant", as board director Wendy warmly described him, was admitted to hospital for further examination. Only a few hours later, the unthinkable happened: Tom passed away, suddenly and unexpectedly, on 22 April 2017. He was only 69 years old.

His death was devastating for Joke, Mark, Ludo, their partners and the four grandchildren. Tom was loved by many. His death hit everyone hard. For LV's friends, employees and managers at home and abroad time stood still. At first, there was just disbelief at Tom's sudden passing. This gave way to mourning, and nowadays memories of Tom bring, without exception, a feeling of pride, a smile or a tear to the faces of those who have worked with him. "Tom was a wonderful man," says Cees Punselie, who worked at



TOM VAN HERK
NOVEMBER 2016

his side for many years. "He was honest and clear, a great boss, a sounding board. You always had his full support."

It is the small things that matter to the employees. The fact he knew everyone who worked for him, how he paid attention to everyone's personal situation. "I had been working there about three months when I ran into him in the hallway. He had never seen me before, but he immediately knew who I was and what I did and asked me if I liked working there. It was a defining moment," says Danny. He was a very social man with a big heart. When a driver became addicted to alcohol after the death of his wife, Tom did not dismiss him but gave him a position in the warehouse instead. After years of loyal service, Tom

believed it was LV's duty to now take care of him.

Mark also remembers his father fondly. "He was an incredibly intelligent man. He thought before he acted and was sensitive too. This didn't always show, but he was a man of feeling, friendly and committed. When an issue arose, he would help solve it. A man among millions." The staff raised funds to give Tom a memorable gift; a large work of art with Delphiniums (or larkspurs), Tom's favourite flowers. This tribute to their manager is prominently displayed on the wall of the beautifully lighted stairwell of the head office on Koggehaven.



A tribute to Tom van Herk. Artwork with Delphiniums by artist Fon Klement.



Opening of the Tom van Herk room. From left to right: Ludo, Joke and Mark van Herk.



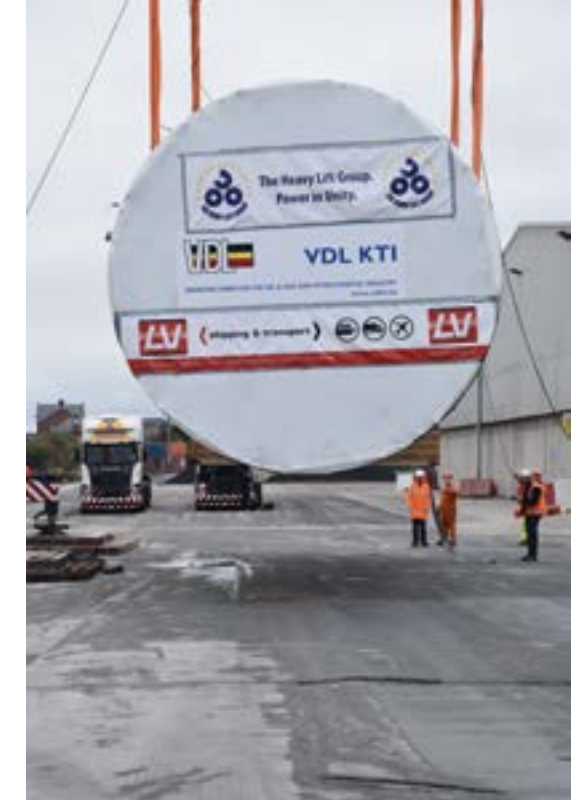
Arjan Bos and Joke van Herk.



Joke van Herk and the grandchildren. From left to right: Lizzy, Finn, Luuk and Kate van Herk.



Joke van Herk, 2021.



TRANSPORT OF BOILERS TO LIVERPOOL

IN 2016, LV SHIPPING & TRANSPORT GROUP IS COMMISSIONED TO TRANSPORT SOME BOILERS FROM MOOL IN BELGIUM TO NORTHWICH IN THE UK. THE BIOREACTORS WILL BE USED FOR THE TRANSITION OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE INTO ENERGY AND RECYCLED MATERIAL. FROM MOOL, THE REACTORS WILL BE TRANSPORTED BY BARGE VIA WESTERLO (BELGIUM) TO ANTWERP. FROM THERE, THEY WILL BE CARRIED OVER SEA TO LIVERPOOL, WHERE THE CARGO WILL BE DRIVEN TO ITS FINAL DESTINATION IN NORTHWICH. IT IS A LOGISTICAL CHALLENGE THAT LV SHIPPING IS UNIQUELY EQUIPPED FOR: PROJECT TRANSPORT BY ROAD AND WATER, THROUGH DAY AND NIGHT.





Mark van Herk and Cees Punselie took part in a trade mission to Indonesia, which was linked to the state visit of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima of March 2020.

A NEW GENERATION AT THE HELM

Mark noticed the loyalty Tom inspired in his British colleagues. Everyone working at the UK offices was ready to support him. Having Mark take over Tom's business seemed natural to them. His many years of cooperation with the British, the friendship and respect aided in this. "It took place without a glitch," says Mark, "I am very happy to say."

Mark was not alone. Together with Chris and Eric, who both had complete confidence in him, Mark took over where Tom left off, but did things his own way. Tom used to look at the administration to check if invoices were paid. But with Mark at the helm, the managing directors were given more decision-making authority.

During the 100 years that LV Shipping has operated, each generation has steered the company in their own way, adapting with the times. Founder Jan Lensveld Sr. wrote the administration on the back of a cigar box which his wife worked out

in the evenings. The founder wasn't one for motor traffic, so he left this for his sons to deal with. Then, in a time when the director was put on a pedestal, one could not simply walk into the office of managing director Jan Jr. Tom changed that, brought in new ideas. He was accessible and liked to have a chat with anyone and everyone at the office. Under his management, the company matured. He put Lensveld on the map, ensuring a healthy financial situation and continuity.

The current generation of managers, with Mark at the helm, are taking the company one step further. LV Shipping is now represented on nearly every continent, which means the global management needs to keep a clear overview and ensure cohesion. The organisational structure is even less hierarchical than it used to be. The managers of overseas branch offices are trusted to run their departments in a way that suits their environment and are expected to make suggestions, come up with ideas and take decisions. Communication lines are short; Mark, Chris and Eric can be reached at any time. Companies are always evolving, and LV Shipping is no exception.



The Transport Logistic fair in Munich, June 2019. From left to right: Sander de Groot, Walter van Nierop, Cees Punselie, Larissa Andeweg, Mark van Herk, Danny da Silva, Herman van der Kam and Arjan de Bie.



Special transport carried out by LV Shipping Ltd., England.

FIVE DEPARTMENTS IN VLAARDINGEN

By 2020, LV Shipping was providing logistics services worldwide. The activities were varied and differed per location. The freight transport company in Vlaardingen had grown into a company with five departments, each specialised in a specific logistics activity. The five departments are housed in the LV Netherlands head office on Koggehaven. Departments:



LENSVELD TRANSPORT:

This department includes the 45 drivers employed by LV shipping and 30 LV trucks. The large, open trucks are driven all over Europe and the United Kingdom. At the office, the planners work on the most efficient deployment of both drivers and equipment. The customer service officers enter the orders into the system and send out the correct invoices. The fleet consists of 31 vehicles, including three closed-body trucks with cranes and one boom truck. New additions include five DAF CF2s and 12 new Volvo FHs.

ELVEX: ferry-operator

This department does not have its own trucks or drivers. Elvex exclusively provides unaccompanied trailer transport between the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Trailers are picked up on both sides of the North Sea to take the freight to its end destination. The trailers return to the ferry fully loaded to repeat the cycle once again. The transported goods are similar to those of Lensveld Transport.



LV SHIPPING & LOGISTICS: freight forwarder

Cees Punselie was hired in 2000 to set up this department, which manages project cargo logistics worldwide. They are in close contact with other LV project departments in Houston, Dammam, Rio de Janeiro, Singapore, Middlesbrough and the Caspian Sea region. The department also manages standard freight transport for clients worldwide. Sea or air freight, per container of truck; this department is the key LV freight forwarding department. Its employees find the best ways to transport freight from A to B, at the best possible rate. This department takes care of the whole process, from assignment to delivery and everything in between.

LV CONTAINER TRUCKING:

This department focusses on the import and export of containers in the ports of



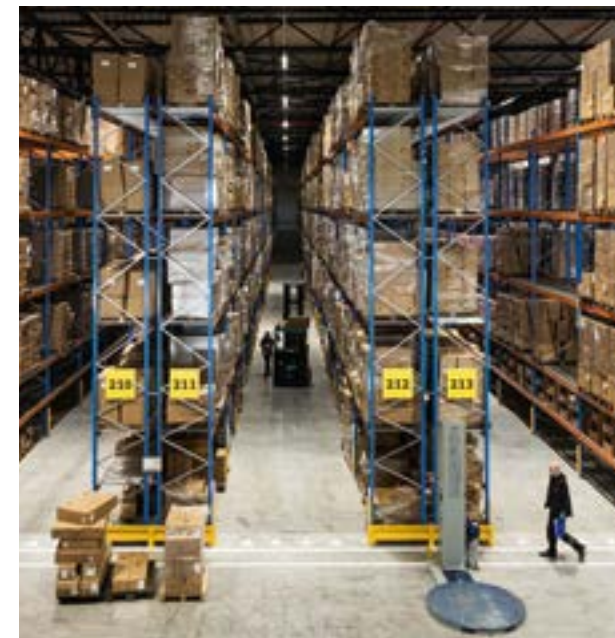
Rotterdam, Antwerp and Germany to the European hinterland, or from these ports to other parts of the world. Rotterdam is one of the largest transshipment ports for containers worldwide and the cargo



can be unloaded at various sites around the port. Though this department does not have its own trailers or trucks, it has approximately 30 drivers on the road each day.

LV WAREHOUSE:

The first LV warehouse is located on the Maasvlakte and is used as a temporary storage warehouse for goods that clients are unable to store themselves. The warehouse is also used as a distribution centre for clients who would rather avoid going through customs in the UK and prefer to store goods in a warehouse on the European continent. Some of these clients are small companies selling goods to consumers via web shops. LV Warehousing works with LV Container Trucking and LV Transport to distribute the goods to the hinterland.



ONE STOP SHOP

The five departments operate as autonomous units but Mark has had unification on the agenda since the moment he was appointed CEO. The company operates worldwide, which means the logo, name and positions should be uniform everywhere. New business cards and folders are being designed and the corporate colours are standardised. In 2019, the board of directors in the Netherlands searched for a candidate who could implement changes and make a single company of LV Netherlands' five separate departments.

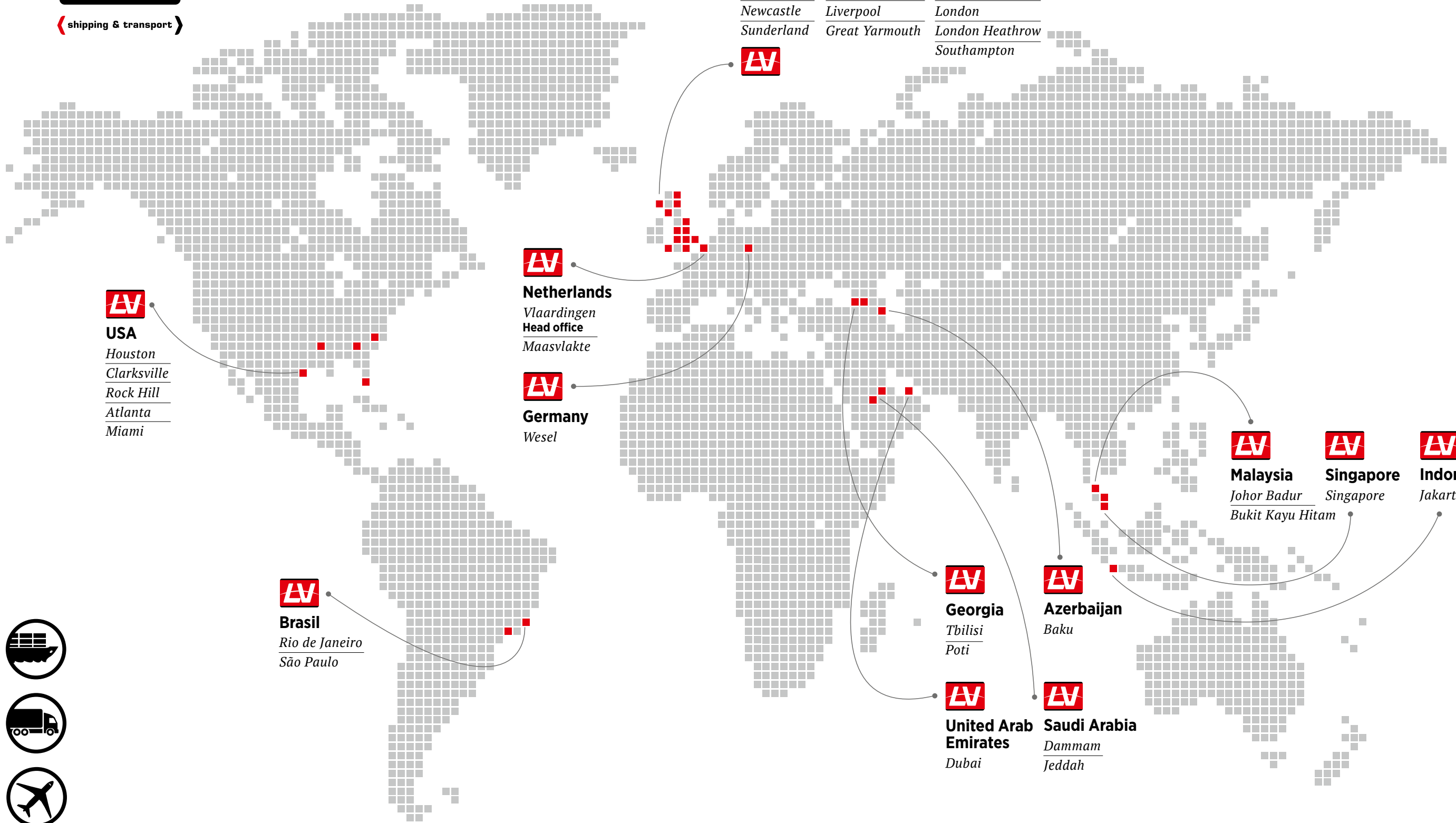
Tax specialist Menno Mulder was appointed general manager for LV Netherlands on 1 January 2020. "I prefer to refer to LV and not Lensveld," says Menno. "We are often associated with Lensveld Transport but that is only one department. We are much more than that." He is charged with positioning LV Shipping & Transport Group as an international logistics services provider and searching for clients that will purchase services from the complete logistics process. To make an all-round freight forwarder out of LV: a full-service provider, according to the one-stop shop principle. A company that can service the complete logistics chain, from storage to packaging through to worldwide transportation services. LV has the knowhow, all that remains is to combine forces.



Menno Mulder (right) having a private chat with workshop manager Henk Orchard, August 2021. Photo: Katja Poelwijk.



shipping & transport



MAKING CONNECTIONS

The first step towards presenting LV as a worldwide full-service provider is standardising position titles to international terminology. “We used to be operational and administrative assistants” say Carla



The Global Strategy Team: Jonathan and Chris Lewin, Fuad Mammadov, Paul Wilson, Eduardo de Miranda, instructor, Wendy Nice, Eric Zoetmulder, Murray Cooper, Suresh Joseph, Nazar Al-Saif.

and Jenny, “but now we are customer service officers.” The second step was hiring HR manager Annemarie Vreeker. Annemarie ensures LV Netherlands professionalises its HR policy. She became the go-between for both employees and management and helps set up good communications and collaborations; an essential role within the organisation. The staff appreciates the work of the new arrivals. “Many positive developments have taken place over the last 18 months,” says



The Board of Directors, out to dinner in the Netherlands, just before Christmas, circa 2015. From left to right: Cees Punselie, Stuart Young, Lee Woolams, Andy Wills-Betts, Adrian French, Kevin Walsh, Colin Ainsley, Mark van Herk, Wendy Nice, Chris Lewin, Terry Collier, Eric Zoetmulder.

Angelique. “As Domestic Manager, Menno has implemented many innovative ideas. Annemarie has come on board as our HR Manager. We are growing, adapting to modern times,” she says.

Sales manager Jean-Paul Kers started working at LV two years ago. He is also an important link between various departments. “When I joined LV, every business unit was working as their own

On a day with no meetings, the AGM team performs a haka, a traditional posture dance of the Māori.



sales department,” he says. He became responsible for sales for the company as a whole – first for LV Netherlands then worldwide. Rick van Dijk was hired as continuous improvement manager to focus on digitisation. Menno brought him to LV 18 months ago to automate various processes. During the short time he has been working at the company, he has already implemented a sales and HR management system – but he has much more on his to-do list. He wants to have a good transport, warehouse and invoicing management system up and running by 2022, starting with LV Netherlands. Not



Rick van Dijk.

only will this be an improvement for LV’s own employees, but it will also make it easier to stay in touch with the client as a service provider. Soon, clients will be able to keep track of the process, request measurement reports and companies will be able to integrate their own systems.

Four years ago, Mark and Eric started to connect LV offices worldwide. “We started off by bringing the regional managers together in a global strategy team,” Eric explains. The team meets twice a year. They discuss what direction they’ll be taking, what can be improved and how the different branches can help one another win clients by adopting each other’s best practices. This strategy is clearly paying off. More and more, LV Shipping wins framework contracts

from large companies; contracts under which LV will be tasked with organising the logistics for a large company operating worldwide for an extended period of time. “Those are great contracts to have,” Eric says, “because they generate work, not just for the Netherlands or the UK, but for the whole Group.”

BREXIT

2020 was a special year, in many ways. The United Kingdom officially left the European Union at the end of January 2020. Brexit had become a reality. In the nick of time, the EU and the UK came to a trade and cooperation agreement on 1 January 2021, which came into effect on 1 May 2021. It affected the trade and transport sector greatly, but owing to long period between announcement and the actual separation, LV was ready. Now, more than ever, companies need a service provider that can take care of all administrative formalities involved in import and export. For that purpose, LV Customer Services was set up in 2020 as a part of LV’s forwarding department in Vlaardingen, which will become the sixth independent division acting as a customs broker by the end of 2021.

LV is based in both the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, safeguarding the continuity of transport between the EU and the UK. However, LV has also had to deal with a few Dutch and British companies that have had trouble with the new rules.



Team building exercise with the LV Malaysia and Singapore team, Langkawi, Malaysia, 2019.



On the beach of Langkawi with the Malaysia and Singapore team.

This led to truck queues for ferries and overfull parking areas in Rijnmond. LV made the old car park on the Waterleidingstraat premises available as an emergency location for stranded trucks.



Langkawi, Malaysia, 2019.

Over the course of first few months, the huge queues gradually dissolved.

WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC

Shortly after Menno started working at LV, the highly contagious virus COVID-19 spread out from China across the world like an oil spill. 2020 was the year of the great pandemic, a year during which people's personal lives were overturned and the economy was hit hard everywhere. The world went into lockdown to restrict the virus. This resulted in world trade imbalance and an uneven container distribution from continent to continent.

Large shipping companies took vessels out of service because containers were no longer arriving from China. As trade recovered, the limited container capacity then resulted in an excessive rise in freight forwarding prices. The price for a single 12-metre container increased from 2,500 to 18,000 dollars. Many companies limited their production. LV ordered new trucks, but the delivery was delayed because manufacturers were unable to supply chips for the automotive industry. In Indonesia, four out of seven LV offices were forced to close their doors because the sudden decrease in work during the pandemic meant that they were no longer viable. LV Malaysia was downsized to a single office, but with 44 employees and 25 temporary workers, LV is still one of Asia's main players.

However, the lockdown also hugely affected personal contact. Employees worked from home when possible and Chris, Eric and Mark cancelled all their annual visits abroad. Before the outbreak, the managers of the various countries used to meet twice annually at a central location somewhere. The last few years, this took place in Dubai, but Singapore and Rio de Janeiro have also hosted them. The managers now stay in touch via weekly online video conferences until the virus is under control.

“THE ESSENCE OF LV IS THE PEOPLE”

FUAD MAMMADOV – AZERBAIJAN

TEACH THEM THE BUSINESS

Fuad studied economics at Azerbaijan University. His master's in international trade ensures he feels at home in the world of freight forwarding and transport. He acquired experience at Bertling, a large German freight forwarder, after which he set up his own business. When LV Azerbaijan opened its doors under his management, Fuad brought in a few Bertling employees to work with him. In addition to this group of experienced professionals, Fuad prefers to work with new graduates: “It's much easier to hire somebody green and fresh and start teaching them how to do business.”

“EDUCATING” THE CLIENT

LV employees play a significant role in “educating” the client, says Fuad. Azerbaijan has a few large freight forwarders and many small-scale carriers. Clients tend to do business with the small, local freight forwarders. They are cheaper but do not have the best equipment at their disposal and know little about the rules, regulations and procedures. Most clients believe that the total value of their cargo will be reimbursed by the forwarder in case of damage because this is set in vague local legislation. This, however, is not the case, Fuad explains. LV adheres to the CMR Convention, concerning legal issues for international freight transport by road. The CMR Convention states that the freight forwarder has limited liability in case of damage. The Azerbaijan constitution states that international treaties are binding, not local legislation. This means clients are often under the impression that they are fully insured when this is not the case, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

LV employees provide training to shippers to help convince clients of the advantages of working with LV. “We describe the danger of transporting their valuable goods using badly maintained equipment as well as the importance of risk insurance policies.” LV also clarifies legislation for clients, to make sure they

understand their position and recognise the risks of their decision. It may take a while, but the company's efforts are slowly starting to bear fruit.

“We also educate our colleagues overseas,” Fuad adds laughingly. “We have taught them to haggle and they now apply this to their negotiations with, for example, Turkish suppliers. Bargaining is part of our culture. We would never accept the first price.” Fuad hopes his colleagues appreciate this input.

ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY

At the office, there is a good mix of men and women. Foad likes that. “We are one big happy family” he says. “We trust and support each other.” LV takes care of their employees, and that is a two-way street. In Azerbaijan, family is sacred. The feeling that we are stronger together also applies to the organisation. Fuad can call to talk to management at any time. An open mind, clarity and trust form the foundation of a good relationship.

However, “the essence of LV is the people,” stresses Fuad. They make the difference. They provide the excellent service that distinguishes LV. The employees' expertise can often mean that an over-size load transport task can be reduced to a standard transport task, saving LV's clients money. “We don't look at transport as a movement from point A to point B. We always look at the options and what we can do different to others.”



Fuad Mammadov, 2021.

“WE TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE FAMILY”

SURESH JOSEPH - SINGAPORE



Suresh Joseph, 2021.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE THE FAMILY VALUES OF LV ARE ALSO PRESENT IN YOUR OWN DEPARTMENT?

“Definitely. The company is still very much family-based, although we are big and all over the world. Here in Singapore, we are very much family-orientated. Everybody believes they are working for an organisation that belongs to them. That’s how the culture has been since we started and somehow manage to maintain. We recruit people who can fit into that culture, who are super team members.”

HOW DO YOU RECRUIT PEOPLE THAT FIT INTO THE COMPANY?

“One of the methods that has worked for us is that we engage people when they are younger and just graduated. For

about 80% of my staff, this is their first job. So they have not seen any other aspect of business, other cut-throat methods. Some are from a logistics background, but about 40% of our staff have nothing to do with logistics. Some of them have a mathematics degree, some of them have a psychology degree. But if you are interested to learn, we are willing to teach. Because logistics is not rocket science, it is common sense. As long as you are willing to learn, you can do it. We are willing to forego that mindset that a person can only excel in what they studied. And once they are in, they say: “Hey, this is like working for a family business.”

“We have an “auntie” who comes into the office each day, who is actually the office cleaner. She makes coffee for everybody, she makes lunch for everybody; she is like a mom in the office for the young graduates. They love her, and they get a home-cooked lunch every day. It’s the small things like this that make people want to stay on. People who leave us, actually leave us, because they decide to get married and decide to have a kid. So that is a genuine, valuable reason. We always say: every dollar we save, we save for ourselves. We are not saving it for the company. We all feel like we are working for a company that belongs to us.”

IS IT AN ADVANTAGE TO WORK WITH LOCAL PEOPLE, WHO KNOW THE CULTURE AND THE LANGUAGE?

“Yes, definitely. The local context is very important, especially in Asia. Sometimes,

it’s just misunderstanding things, nothing big. For example: if I were to ask you “would you like a piece of cake?” and you tell me “no”, in European culture that’s accepted. Maybe you don’t want cake, maybe you are on a diet or you simply don’t like a cake, but in Asia this is totally different. If you were to ask me “do you want a piece of cake?”, I will tell you no, even if I actually want it. Because I expect you to ask another time; “are you sure you don’t want it?” You must first persuade me to have the cake. We are also multiracial; we have Indians, we have Chinese, we have Malays... In Malaysia, they have their own groups, in Indonesia they have their own groups - so it’s multicultural.”

SO THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT LV MEMBERS ARE NOT AN ISSUE?

“That is 100% correct. There are cultural differences, of course. But beyond all of that, I think because we treat each other like family, we don’t really see it. We are open enough to ask: “Is this actually what you mean?” I think that’s the biggest advantage of working in LV, because you can actually ask that question without being worried. And it works from top level, all the way back down.”

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

“The challenge is one thing. Second is the satisfaction when you give a solution to the customer. When the rest of them say: “It’s impossible,” and we say: “no problem.” It’s the satisfaction of doing what others say cannot be done, or is even impossible. I strongly believe anyone can do it, as long as you put your heart, mind and soul into doing it. I think that’s the biggest benefit of the industrial logistics

setting. Logistics is a very creative industry; you are given a set of tools. How you manipulate the tools, determines if you succeed. It’s like cooking. Everybody has been given the same ingredients, but how you mix everything together, determines the final product.”

IS THIS WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LV AND OTHER LOGISTIC COMPANIES?

“Definitely. That makes a huge difference. When a customer asks me: “Can you make a decision on the spot or do you need to refer to somebody?” I can always tell them I can make the decision on the spot. But if you go to a big corporate structure, nobody can make that decision. They need to ask their boss, and their boss needs to ask their boss; but within LV it is accepted. No matter how big it is, I can make a decision and I know my directors will stand with me. So that is a huge advantage, especially in the industry that we are in, where you sometimes need to make snap decisions and you can’t afford to wait for Europe to wake up. LV gave all of us that liberty. They say: “Go ahead, do what you think is right in your own region. We don’t want to give you some standard operating procedure from Europe to follow wherever you are in the world. You do what is workable for your own local market.”

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE?

“I think the biggest challenge in the next ten 10 years is to find people who will replace people like us. We must start finding people today, really, people who can take care of things. People who can take over from us, maybe in another 10 to 15 years. It’s a fact of life. But I think that will be one of our biggest challenges moving

The employees of LV Indonesia.

Picture taken of all employees of LV Singapore on the occasion of the Chinese New Year celebration, February 2019.





“MY DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN”

PAUL WILSON - UNITED STATES



Paul Wilson, 2021.

AS THE TWIG IS BENT, SO IS THE TREE INCLINED

Paul Wilson began his career with LV at 17 years of age at the LV Shipping office in Newcastle. He was trained by the managing director at the time, Mike Fryer, who taught him all the ins and outs of logistics. “He is the most knowledgeable guy I have ever met. He taught me everything I know over the years. His door

was always open,” says Paul. He took this knowledge with him when he moved to the States. Young people without a logistics background are brought into the business to learn the ropes hands-on from experienced employees. Thus, a new generation is trained on-site. Paul trusts his team, just as he was trusted by his own mentor back then. “My door is always open and when anybody needs me, at any time a day, they can always contact me, for whatever reason.” This helps forge a tight-knit team.

NORTH AND SOUTH

“The difference between doing business in the North and South of the United States is huge,” says Paul. In the North, people are more cosmopolitan, they get down to business quicker and close a deal sooner than in the South. There, it just doesn’t work that way; they like to take their time. Business relations need to be nurtured: “You never going to get business meeting somebody for the first time. People want to know who you are, trust you. You need at least half a dozen meetings and maybe a lunch in between. It takes a good few months.”

Paul works from Houston and is used to investing time and effort in business relationships. The city is known for its ethnic diversity. People from all around the world come to work in the oil and gas industry there, but nobody stays for long. Once the project comes to a close, they move away with the next project. Paul and his colleagues feel right at home in this ever-changing environment. “We get

to understand everybody’s work ethic and have a full appreciation for where everybody is from.” It is a great place to be a global freight forwarder in.

KERMIT

Paul’s team faced a big challenge a few years ago. ExxonMobil commissioned the renewal of 75 kilometres of pipeline in the US. Van Leeuwen Pipe and Tube Group in Zwijndrecht was delivering the piping and, thanks to Cees Punselie’s efforts, LV Houston was in charge of the logistics of the operation. The pipes arrived by ship in the Port of Houston and were transported by truck to a facility in South Houston to be sorted and bundled. The pipes were then transported to various destinations inland in the United States. The first batch of pipes was transported to Kermit, a remote town in the desert in West Texas. Paul: “Think of a Clint Eastwood Western. It was literally in the middle of nowhere, where there is only tumbleweeds and sand.” They needed to find drivers for the 645-kilometre trips.

Paul decided to work with “the small guy”: local, independent entrepreneurs with two or three trucks. Not the easiest option. The LV team met with individual transport companies and drivers to discuss the

with smaller carriers and not the largest, ensuring LV is in direct contact with each individual driver. This allows the company to monitor the logistics process and guarantee quality.

The operation is timed to perfection, taking client preferences and American legislative requirements into consideration. Just when LV was waiting for the green light, the message came that the client would need the loading times to be staggered. Red alert at LV in Houston. In the “war room”, a new plan was drawn up within a matter of hours; more drivers were hired and they would drive in shifts. Every driver took care of two cargo loads one week and three the next; “Load on Monday, deliver Tuesday, load on Wednesday and deliver Thursday.” The system worked: all cargo loads were delivered in Kermit according to schedule. All 1900 trips were completed damage-free, an unprecedented occurrence. The supplier, Van Leeuwen Pipe and Tube Group, organised a party to thank everyone.

THE FUTURE

Paul has noticed that the volume of work in the oil and gas industry is decreasing. Green energy projects are taking their place. So far, 2021 has been a year of new developments. LV started setting up new fulfilment and distribution centre for online e-commerce in Houston and a special digital transport system for domestic shipments. “Our industry was falling a little behind,” says Paul. “We have to move forward.” The system allows LV clients to register their own cargo transport orders. “We offer everything exactly the way our customer prefers.”



The unloading of pipes with a shovel. Kermit, Texas, 2016.



Paul Wilson, Mark van Herk and Chris Lewin at the Houston Rockets (basketball) game, Houston, April 2019.



Work on the pipe transport project P11, Texas 2016.

project objectives. “It was a unique challenge,” Paul recounts. “We literally had to put pen to paper for them and explain it to them at their office; this is what we’re gonna do, this is how many trucks you’re gonna get, this is the cost of running your truck, and this is what you’re going to get at the end of it. We convinced them all.” This is the typical LV approach, working



XI
100 YEARS OF MOVING FORWARD

2021

100 YEARS OF MOVING FORWARD

2021

Our history shows LV can weather tough storms. “There have been milestones,” Chris says. Sometimes the occasion was a sad one, like the passing of Tom and of Terry, and others were moments of celebration. “We have always pulled together and seen our way through.” Across time and continents, the Lensveld family values have remained a pillar of LV. “You tell a story, when you have a company,” he explains. For him, LV’s story is one of mutual respect, of caring for one another and of sharing in success around the world. Tom van Herk understood the importance of this from the start. “Many companies have failed,” explains Mark, “thinking they can start a company in Singapore with a Dutch manager and let them deal with it all”. At LV, local management teams are also entrepreneurs; they earn their own bonus. Having local, committed people who know the cultural climate and clients works incredibly well. The managers of the various regions are in close contact with each other. This gives the company an advantage over the large logistics service providers who get the contracts, but are ultimately unable to deliver and end up turning to LV. Mark: “We have a good mix of local knowledge and drive, with the right reputation to be hired by larger companies.”

LV’s transition into a full-service provider started a few years ago, and has continued behind the scenes despite the lockdown. The pandemic also opened up new windows of opportunity. For example, the rapid advance of e-commerce and the opening of warehouses on the Maasvlakte near Rotterdam, and later the one in Houston. “Deliveries used to be what we call ‘just in time, just in place’ – but now we actually have ‘just in case,’” Menno explains. When disasters such as a pandemic or tsunami strike, world trade is disrupted and stock cannot be delivered. If stock is stored in more than one place, trade does not have to grind to a halt.

By combining forces, LV has increasingly been able to win long-term, large contracts which require utilisation of the expertise of the entire Group. As a business economist and the financial director CFO of the LV Group, Eric Zoetmulder knows better than anyone how important clear reporting to the client can be. The client wants to know how much exactly

LV Shipping saves them and what LV can deliver. “We still have some room for improvement in that area,” he says. “It’s going well, but we can always do better.” LV’s long-term vision means there is more than enough time for change, development and growth. There is no radical intervention when things get a little tough. Eric: “We don’t have to live by the issues of the day, which means things are quite stable. And that, in turn, is great for our clients as well as our staff.”

In the future, LV will also focus more on the development and implementation of new IT systems and digital interconnect- edness with clients. “I believe we are gradually becoming more of a data company,” says Mark. Large shipping companies are moving towards chain integration and are looking for partners to assist them. “This is only feasible if we build relationships with the client and show them we provide added value.”

Another is in the area of sustainable green energy. In the 1980s and ‘90s LV grew, driven by the construction of drilling platforms. Over the past 100 years the global population has grown from 2.7 to more than 7.5 billion people. If this growth continues, there will be 10 billion people living on Earth by 2050. “This will obviously affect logistics,” says Menno. “Rotterdam will be the largest hydrogen hub in Europe,” he predicts. Other types of investments will be necessary. The changes are clearly visible at sea: offshore platforms are being replaced by extensive wind farms.

LV invests worldwide in education for young people who want to get into logistics. No prior knowledge required, only the drive to. Chris Lewin, now 70 years old, is not ready to retire. “He’s still got some years to go,” his son Jonathan assures us. “Honestly, he has more life in his little finger than most people 30 years younger.” Chris, who put LV Shipping on the world map together with Tom, will stay on to share his knowledge and expertise. Chris: “Looking back,” he muses, “I enjoyed all of it. Obviously there have been some challenging times when every day wasn’t as nice as the next. But in the overall sense, was enormously rewarding.” He is optimistic about the future: “The organisation can go on to do some great things. I believe the best is still to come.”



The “Milestones Board” in the hall of the office in Felixstowe.

The current management is aware that LV Shipping & Transport Group has grown considerably during the past few years. Further steps towards professionalisation

From left to right: Suresh Joseph, Eric Zoetmulder, Wendy Nice, Paul Wilson, Jonathan Lewin, Nazari Al-Saif, Chris Lewin, Eduardo de Miranda.



have been taken in the jubilee year: 2021. Arjan Bos joined the LV Group Global Executive Board, which also includes Mark van Herk, Chris Lewin and Eric Zoetmulder, on 1 September 2021. Arjan will rethink the organisational structure and develop new strategies to provide LV with a solid foundation for further growth. "Eventually, you get so big that you have to standardise and create a system to record information," he says. Connecting people is an essential aspect of this. Just as Arjan joined, Mark and Eric left the board of directors of LV Netherlands. The board members in the Netherlands had always been part of the Global Executive Board but it was time for reform. As of 1 September 2021, the three-headed board of directors for the Netherlands branch is made up of Annemarie Vreeker, Menno Mulder and Cees Punselie "The time for change had come," Annemarie says, "now LV Netherlands operates independently of the Global Executive Board, just like all other branches."

LV is an ever-learning company. A company is continuously evolving to stay relevant and keep up with the current

market. In logistics, no day is the same. Responding to fluctuating circumstances is an absolute must, but history has shown that LV is up for the task. In all of a century, no challenge has been too great. Not taking to the UK market in the 1970s, nor when the company spread its wings to other continents.

In 2021, LV trucks driving through Europe are still branded with 'Lensveld'. The white letters on a red background are one of the last reminders of old Lensveld family business from Vlaardingen. A memento of a bygone era. It is important to look back but, to quote Jan Lensveld Jr.:

"Tomorrow is more important than yesterday. The past matters only if you can learn something from it for the future."



The management of LV Netherlands. From left to right: Menno Mulder, Annemarie Vreeker en Cees Punselie, september 2021.



The Global Executive Board. From left to right: Jonathan Lewin, Chris Lewin, Mark van Herk, Eric Zoetmulder and Arjan Bos, September 2021.



Chris Lewin, september 2021.



Jonathan Lewin, september 2021.



The Board of Directors, United Kingdom, September 2021. From left to right: Chris Lewin, Colin Ainsley, Terry Collier, Lee Woolams, Wendy Nice and Kevin Walsh. Not present in the photo: Andy Willis-Betts.

AFTERWORD



I never knew my great-grandfather, Jan Lensveld Sr., but I knew my great-grandmother, Annetje. As a child, my mother and I often went to visit her and later, when I attended secondary school in Westwijk, I regularly went to see her after school. As soon she opened the door, you would be met with the smell of freshly baked biscuits. She loved her games, although she always had to win, even if that meant cheating occasionally. She was a wonderful woman with a youthful spirit. She was someone you could have a laugh with, and confide in about anything. Looking back, I realise just how special it is that I, as a teenager, got to spend that much time with my great-grandmother; a woman of nearly one hundred years old.

Growing up, the company was always part of daily life in a light-hearted way. When the telephone at home rang, often it would be an English or German-speaking person on the other end of the line. We quickly learned how to answer, what to say and how to politely take or pass on a message. We often visited the UK with the whole family. That's how far Jonathan and I go back – he was only a small lad back then. We would go out for a meal in Central Park in Middlesbrough with the Lewins. Nowadays, Jonathan and I carry on the tradition and take our own children there.

For the first time since its establishment, all those years ago, the history of LV Shipping & Transport Group has been recorded in this jubilee book. *100 Years of Moving Forward* has become a beautiful record of the past and present. The combination of facts, personal stories, memories and documentation representing different points of view, paint a complete picture of our company. It all contributes to one shared history: that of LV Shipping & Transport Group. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I did. I am convinced that this jubilee book merely marks the start of the next one hundred years. I look forward to adding many more chapters to the story of LV Shipping & Transport Group with you in the future.

Celebratory regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. van Herk', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark van Herk
Vlaardingen
October 2021



44

VLAARDINGEN
HOLLAND

LV

LENSVELD

LENSVELD

Workers in high-visibility vests and hard hats standing near the truck.

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Harry and Anneke Lensveld - van Eijk
Han and Ans van Elk - Lensveld
Joke van Herk - Lensveld

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Brazil: Eduardo de Miranda

Singapore: Suresh Joseph

United States: Paul Wilson

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