

Tribute to Ben De Cat



Dear General Steffers,
Dear Colonel Kedzierski,
Dear Participants,
Dear Friends,
Dear Mieke



When the Spirit of Denmark departed from Berlin, there was still doubt whether this ship would actually be allowed to enter Belgium.

Thanks to your massive support, we were able to continue sailing at the end of 2019, but we did not know how turbulent the sea would be.

Due to COVID-19, the trip took much longer than expected but the heaviest storm to endure was the loss of the record holder of the NATO Chess Championship. The unexpected death of Ben De Cat shocked the entire International Military Chess Committee and the numerous expressions of support were greatly appreciated by Delcatto's loved ones as well as by the members of the Belgian Military Chess Club.

Now that the Spirit of Denmark has finally sailed into the harbor of Blankenberge, I am convinced that our most joyful and social chess player ever would not want to see us sad. His joie de vivre was appreciated by everyone and without realizing it, he gave us a few life lessons in this way.

In Amsterdam, for example, he taught us that it is not wise to walk into a glass door in a white polo shirt with a cup of coffee in hand.

Over the years, he also taught us that since Sofie's entry into the Belgian Military Chess Team, it's just a matter of nodding "yes" when she is speaking.

However, the most important lesson he taught us is that just as he played his chess games in a unique way, you also have to live your own life in a unique way.

With the passing of Ben we have lost a colleague, a friend, a chess partner, an artist, a family member... but in our minds he will also be present during the future editions of the NATO Chess Championship.

In addition, the Belgian participants will always wear him close to their heart with the by Delcatto designed logo of the Belgian Military Chess Club proudly worn on the chest.

This week, a Delcatto Art Exhibition will be held at the back of the tournament hall and is there a better way to pay tribute to Ben by raising a glass of "the Fools of Bruges", better known as the delicious blonde beer "Brugse Zot"?

I therefore ask you to symbolically raise your glass in honor of Ben and to share your good memories of him with the other participants after a minute of silence.

Kimball ROSSEEL
President
Belgian Military Chess Club vzw