



4/5 De Nationale LegPuzzles

Some thoughts on and a solution for this intriguing Dutch Puzzle

by Fred Horn

Early January, 2013 Rob van Lindén put a picture of a 4/5 puzzle on his website which is devoted to Dutch Games—hong.vlinden.com/index.asp?u=&z=nationale%20legpuzzle&zio=j&vi=li&uz=n. The 4/5 puzzle and its accompanying photographs are credited to Han de Bruin and are from his own collection.

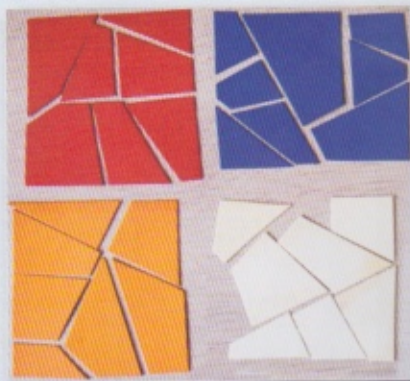
The concept of the puzzle was interesting: give the assembler four separate puzzles to construct and then using just some of the pieces reassemble them to form yet another “hidden” puzzle.

First, nothing is known about the firm, STABO, who produced the puzzle. On the website you can find one other item from this company: Spijkertje-vast. G.R.D.M. is part of the G.R. code list—used for printed items between 1944 and 1950 in the Netherlands—and regulated prices, which in this case was 95 cents. The puzzle is probably from 1945, because of the Dutch ‘spelling’ and the use of 4 and 5 on the lid.

Beschrijving Nationale Legpuzzles.
 Vormt van de roode, witte, blauwe en oranje stukjes 4 vierkanten, elk van 10 x 10 cm. Als U dit gelukt is, neemt dan van de blauwe 3 stukjes en van de andere kleuren elk 2 stukjes. Deze zijn met een zwarte stip aan de achterzijde gemerkt en U maakt hiervan de **NATIONALE LEGPUZZLE**.

The above directions translate: make four squares, each measuring 10 x 10 cm from the red, white, blue, and orange pieces. Once this is accomplished, then take three of the blue pieces and two each of the other colors (all marked with black dots on their reverse side) and reassemble them to form a new square puzzle.

The red and orange squares are already assembled properly, but the blue pieces need rearranging. The white square is a complete mess, with one piece missing.



The “hidden” 5th square as described is to be made from the above pieces, each marked with black dots on their backside.

Because of the very poor way the puzzles were punched out of the cardboard it was not easy to lay down the four puzzles. The dimensions differ because of the, let’s say, pitiful results of the punching. Luckily for me however, all the pieces with black dots on the backside were present.

Solution for the puzzles and a suggestion for the right dimensions

As mentioned, the solutions for the red and orange puzzles were easy as the photo already showed their correct positions. In the case of the blue one, it took me several hours to complete the puzzle. I only had the photograph from which I made a printed copy. I did cut out the pieces to discover that all of the dimensions had been distorted and at first nothing really fit together. The white one was even worse! Because of the missing white piece and because of the not-so-great shape of the pieces, I failed to find its solution.

Thus I tried to work the other way around by starting with the 5th square. At one point I realized that one of the red pieces was far too small, but I do submit that the arrangement of the pieces below must be the SOLUTION!

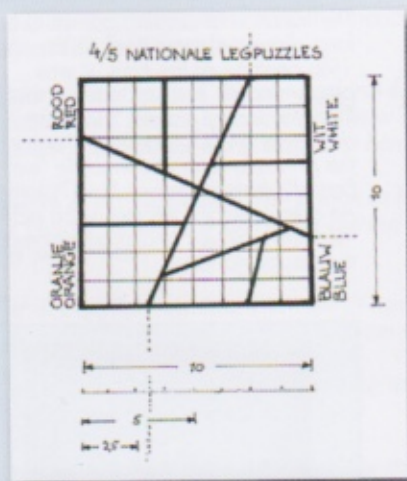


With the white pieces in the right position within Puzzle 5 it again took me several hours to get a proper solution for the white 10 x 10 square.

But I still had no idea of the REAL dimensions of the pieces. After a bit of trial and error and measuring all the sides and angles of the pieces (and how these pieces were created), an idea did come to mind. The next explanation is what I believe is the method used to create the puzzles.

The 10 x 10 square is divided in a 'grid' of 16 x 16 small squares. Taking the 5th puzzle into consideration, there are two crossing lines under an angle of 90 degrees, separating the four colors.

Using the same 'grid' for the other four puzzles, I first put the pieces (with the black dots at the backside) into their proper position.



This resulted in the following solutions for the 4 colors:



I forwarded the solution to Han de Bruin and he answered as follows:

"Looking at the original pieces, the 'punching' is much better than what you realized by copying and cutting out. I did lay out the 5th puzzle and this is the result:



Anyhow you did a nice piece of work!"

With a better picture at my disposal I can now see that I made one mistake concerning the 'slicing' of the 2 red parts. To get the original puzzle, the vertical line should be 1/16th to the right!

But let the way I did it be *my variant!* AGPC

Have you heard?

"Milton's quest for the love of Ms. Bradley was a risk but no sorry trivial pursuit, yet he hadn't a clue why she had a monopoly on his heart's desires—in fact, it boggled his mind and caused him great aggravation because, in his checkered and troubled careers, he had always scrabbled hard and it drove him bonkers that she considered life just a game."

— Linda Boatright, Omaha, NE

Editor's note: Thanks to Bruce Whitehill for the above quote. He noted this entry had won a "Dishonorable Mention" in the category of "Vile Puns" at the Bulwer-Lytton fiction contest of 2012.