

30. April 2026

City Hall

Hermann Barking receives the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany

Ceremonial award ceremony in the hall of the historic town hall - THW veteran is honoured

Bocholt - Hermann Barking has been awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his decades of voluntary work for the Federal Agency for Technical Relief. District Director Dr Ansgar Hörster presented the award on behalf of the Federal President during a ceremony in the historic town hall. Numerous guests and companions paid tribute to the honouree's tireless commitment to society.

Hermann Barking received the high state honour for his life's work in the festive setting of the historic town hall. District Director Dr Ansgar Hörster, who presented the award on behalf of District Administrator Dr Kai Zwicker, emphasised the extraordinary consistency of the honouree. Hermann Barking joined the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) back in 1959 and played a decisive role in shaping the Bocholt branch for more than 65 years. "Today we are honouring a commitment that goes far beyond the scope of responsible civic behaviour", said District Director Hörster.

Hermann Barking's career with the THW is characterised by a high level of responsibility. As team leader of the first rescue team and the first catering team, he made significant contributions to the organisation's operational capability, "especially during the Cold War, when civil defence was of strategic importance", said Hörster.

Dr Jan-Bernd Haas, local representative of THW Bocholt, described Barking as the "most loyal soul of the local association". He had acted as an important cog in the community and had enjoyed respect and recognition for generations. Even after his transition to the status of "old helper" in 2001, Barking remained a counsellor and supporter of the association.

Mayor Christian Mangel emphasised the importance of this commitment to the local community. "Bocholt is a city that thrives on togetherness, there are many people here who leave their mark through their actions", said Mayor Mangel. Barking had shown through his attitude and inner compass that "helping is not just a task, but a way of life". His dealings with younger generations were particularly noteworthy. Hermann Barking accompanied THW youth trips for many years and conveyed values such as respect and a sense of socio-political responsibility to the participants.

According to the speakers, family support was also a key factor in his many years of service. The honour therefore also indirectly acknowledged the support of his wife Ursel Barking, who made her husband's commitment possible over the decades. At the end of the ceremony, those present offered their congratulations to a man whose work has had a lasting impact on the technical relief organisation in the Borken district.

[Source: Borken district](#) 



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